

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

No. 495.

NEW YORK, JULY 17, 1908.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADY'S AND LITTLE AH CHIN; OR, THE SECRET DENS OF CHINATOWN.

*By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.*



"Hold him, Harry! Hold him!" shouted Old King Brady, throwing up his hands. The little Chink doubled up his fists and continued to defy the enraged man. Harry caught him around the waist and held on in spite of his struggles.





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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CASE WHICH CAME BY LOT.

Old King Brady sat in his office in Union Square, New York, in something of a quandary.

He had spread out before him six letters, all of which had been removed from their envelopes.

While he was thus employed—it was a blazing hot morning in the month of August—there entered his two partners in the Brady Detective Bureau, namely, Young King Brady and Miss Alice Montgomery.

Opening a letter he read as follows:

“Brady Detective Bureau, New York:

“Gentlemen:—I am in a serious trouble. The matter is of too private a nature for me to write about. I am a rich man, and will pay well for professional assistance, and as I desire only the best obtainable I apply to you. I endorse a retainer in shape of a check for \$1,000, which kindly return if you decide not to take up my case.

“If on the contrary you decide to confer with me, which does not bind you in any way, if you will call at Pier —, East River, at 1 P. M. you will find my steam yacht ready to take you to my home, and you can return to New York in the same manner. As I am an invalid it is quite impossible for me to come to you.

“Very truly yours,

“H. J. DUSENBERG.”

Medhurst, L. I., August 10th, 19—.

“A blind sort of a letter,” remarked Alice.

“It is a case I care least about,” said Old King Brady.

“The size of the retainer alone kept the letter from the waste basket. The man evidently means business.”

“May I see the Secret Service letter?” asked Alice.

“Certainly. It is there. Help yourself,” was the reply.

Alice pulled over the letters, and selecting the one endorsed by the chief of the Secret Service Bureau, read aloud as follows:

“Hong Kong, China, July 1st, 190—.

“Secret Service Bureau, Washington, U.S.A.

“Gentlemen:—We have recently learned that Damon J. Harbord, who robbed the Royal Colonial Bank of this city of a million and over two years ago, is now living in New York City, in close retirement, under an assumed name. We shall be very grateful for any information of this man. Full account of his crime will be found on file with the New York police. The bank at the time of his disappearance offered \$20,000 for his arrest and the recovery of the money, which the thief lifted in a lump;

\$5,000 for his arrest and the recovery of any part from \$10,000 up to \$100,000. The entire reward holds good for anything recovered over the latter item. We give you this pointer and are prepared to divide the reward in any way you say if you can help us out. Yours truly,

“Hong Kong Detective Bureau,  
“Per J.”

“The idea of sending such a letter to the United States Secret Service!” exclaimed Young King Brady.

“It is rather rank,” replied the old detective. “But the chief seems to have taken it seriously. He may be personally acquainted with these people for all I know. But for his endorsement I should not have given it any consideration, as I said.”

“Then we take up with this Mr. Dusenbergs case?”

“Yes. Meet me at the wharf on time. I am going out now and shall not be back again.”

And at one precisely the members of the Brady Detective Bureau gathered on the wharf.

Old King Brady was the last to arrive.

“Well, and where is the yacht?” he demanded.

“There is no yacht here,” replied Harry. “I have made careful inquiry. No such yacht is in the habit of coming here.”

“Strange!”

“Looks as if we had been fooled.”

“But the retainer.”

“I have told Harry several times that no man in his senses would put up a thousand dollars to carry through a practical joke on us,” said Alice.

“Yes; if the check is good for anything,” added Harry.

“That is just the point, of course,” replied Old King Brady, “but the check happens to be good.”

“Ah! You know?”

“Yes. I looked the matter up during the morning. The check is on the Fourth National. As I felt anxious to know something about this Mr. Dusenbergs, I called there, and being well acquainted, easily got the information. The man carries a heavy account. He lives the life of a hermit at the old Harmon place at Medhurst, which he purchased two years ago. Nobody knows what his business is further than that he has operated in stocks to a limited extent, and very successfully.”

“Then he is a man of mystery?” asked Alice.

“Decidedly so,” was the reply. “Strange about the yacht. I cannot doubt that he meant business when he wrote that letter.”

“Perhaps the trouble which he anticipated may have come to a head,” suggested Harry.

“That is exactly what has occurred to me,” said the old detective. “Have you a Long Island Railroad timetable with you?”



Harry had, and he proceeded to consult it in reference to the Medhurst trains.

"We can get a train at two o'clock from Long Island City," he said.

"Then we can afford to wait here until half past one, and in the meantime the yacht may come," said Old King Brady. "Already I am growing interested. It comes to me that Aliee's selection has been a fortunate one, and that we are about to start in on a remarkable case."

They waited, but the yacht did not come.

It was then decided to go to Medhurst by train, which was accordingly done.

The ride was a long one, Medhurst lying beyond Glen Cove, directly on the Sound.

Upon their arrival the Bradys went at once to a small hotel opposite the station, and proceeded to inquire about Mr. Dusenber.

"He lives down on the Point," said the landlord. "It's three miles, but unless you have an appointment with him I don't believe he will see you. He is a very peculiar man."

"We have an appointment," replied the old detective. "He was to send his yacht to New York for us, but it did not come."

"It hasn't gone out, I know," said the landlord. "It's a fine craft, but he very seldom uses it since his daughter went away. The captain and crew all live here in Medhurst. They are under full pay all the time, and he allows them to attend to other business when the yacht is tied up at the pier there by the house. When he wants them he telephones me, and they go to the yacht. My son is one of the crew. He has not had a call these two weeks."

"Can't we get him on the telephone then?" asked Old King Brady.

"Perhaps you can and perhaps you can't," was the reply. "He is a very peculiar man, you see. He stays locked in his own room for days together. Sometimes he does not even eat for three or four days."

"But the servants?"

"He only has two, an old woman, who acts as cook and housekeeper, and her daughter, who is waitress and chambermaid. Their orders are never to disturb him."

"Suppose you see if you can get any of them on the telephone? If Mr. Dusenber can see me, I should like to hire a team of yours and go down there. If he is not home, of course, it is no use."

"I'll try," said the landlord, and he proceeded to work the telephone.

After some calling back and forth he announced that he had Mrs. Fernald, the housekeeper, on the wire.

"I'll talk to her," said Old King Brady, and he went to the telephone.

"This is Mr. Dusenber's, and you are Mrs. Fernald, the housekeeper?" he called.

"Yes," replied a woman's voice.

"Can I talk with Mr. Dusenber? My name is Brady. I have an appointment with him."

"No, sir. Mr. Dusenber hasn't been out of his room since day before yesterday. Nobody is allowed to disturb him when he is locked in his room."

"But this is an important matter"

"I can't help it. Those are my orders. It would cost me my place to knock on Mr. Dusenber's door or to attempt to communicate with him in any way, and I shall not do it. Good-by."

"Wait! Hold on! Confound the woman, she is gone!" cried Old King Brady.

He rang the telephone bell furiously, but nothing came of it.

Giving up at last he turned to find the landlord regarding him with a sarcastic smile.

"Well, you did not make much out of that?" the landlord said.

"No. You seem not surprised."

"I am not. I expected nothing else."

"Who is this Mrs. Fernald?"

"Don't know; but I know who you are."

"Who?"

"Old King Brady, the detective."

Harry turned away disgustedly, and walking to the door looked out upon the dusty road, along which an automobile was flying.

Alice was standing by, and she asked what the matter was.

"Oh, it's the Governor's trade-mark clothes again. Here we ought to be incog, but this landlord has recognized him on sight."

"Well, well, Harry. It can't be helped."

"Of course it can't be helped. Just the same it jars me. If he only would adopt some other style of dress when we go out on a case."

But this was old business.

Yet it was something which Young King Brady can never get used to.

Always when not in disguise Old King Brady wears a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and standup collar, and a big white felt hat with an extraordinary broad brim.

But there are times when this works much in the old detective's favor in spite of Young King Brady's opinion.

Old King Brady has dressed like this for many years, and chances are he will continue to do so until the end of his career.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MYSTERY OF MR. DUSENBERG.

And while Harry was putting up a kick about Old King Brady's costume, the old detective himself was pursuing his inquiries of the landlord regardless of what was passing behind him.

He soon "rang off" however, for he did not want to make his curiosity too marked.

Practically all he learned had been known to him before.

The important points which have to do with our story we will give right now.

That Mr. Dusenber had purchased the old Harmon place about two years before.

That the place had been several years vacant when he



came to live there, bringing with him his daughter, a young woman of about nineteen or twenty, the housekeeper and her daughter.

That these people lived entirely for themselves, neither receiving company nor paying visits.

Except the yacht's crew, not a man was ever allowed about the place, and they were never allowed to enter the house, or to pass beyond a certain gate.

That Mr. Dusenberg seldom came to Medhurst, and when he did so it was always by a hired team, summoned over the telephone.

That his daughter had been absent for some months.

That it was known that the young woman, whom her father called Victoria, had gone to New York on the yacht, accompanied by several trunks. On that occasion Mr. Dusenberg announced that she was going to California. She had not been seen since.

Having got this far, Old King Brady gave it up, feeling—which was certainly a fact—that he had questioned the landlord more closely than was wise at the commencement of a case.

But the circumstances surrounding Mr. Dusenberg were so peculiar that the temptation to pick up what points he could were too strong for the old detective to resist.

"Well, let's have your team," he said at last. "Mr. Dusenberg sent for me. I have no idea what he wants. I dare say he will see me."

"Want a driver?" demanded the landlord.

Old King Brady thought not. He was quite certain that he could attend to the driving himself; so the landlord summoned a hostler, and the hostler produced a two-seated arrangement drawn by a stout horse.

The detectives then started for the "point."

Their way lay along one of those beautifully shaded lanes for which this part of Long Island is so famous.

It ended at a high stone wall in which there was an iron gate.

This was the old Harmon place, as they were informed by a blacksmith whose shop they passed, and where they stopped to inquire the way.

Making his horse fast to a tree, Old King Brady tried the gate, and finding it securely locked, pulled several times at a bell which seemed to connect with the big stone mansion, to be discovered back among the trees and shrubbery.

At last they saw a young girl dressed in white and wearing a chip straw hat coming down the gravelled walk.

As she approached the gate, swinging a big key, she eyed them curiously, but she did not speak until she came close up to the bars.

"Are you the gentleman who telephoned?" she asked then.

"I am," replied the old detective.

"You are Old King Brady?"

"Yes."

"And these people?"

"Are my partners, Young King Brady and Miss Montgomery. We wish to see Mr. Dusenberg."

"My ma says I am to let you in," said the girl then.

"We hardly know what to do, sir, Mr. Dusenberg is so

peculiar. But he told my ma day before yesterday that he was going to send for you, so I suppose it is all right."

"You are the housekeeper's daughter, I presume?"

"Yes; my name is Nina Fernald. It is a wonder I can even remember it. The way we live here is enough to drive anyone mad with lonesomeness."

The girl spoke bitterly.

It was easy to see that she was a very much disgusted proposition.

Without further talk she opened the gate, and carefully locking it behind the detectives, preceded them along the gravel walk up to the broad piazza, which extended along the entire front of the house.

The big front door was open, and a stout woman stood waiting for them.

"Are these the people who telephoned, Nina?" she asked.

The girl nodded and walked off around the corner of the house.

"Well, Mrs. Fernald, have you seen Mr. Dusenberg since you cut me off on the telephone?" Old King Brady asked.

"No," replied the woman, "and I don't propose to try to see him. All I can do is to show you his room. You must manage the rest for yourself."

"Very well, madam. I am at your service."

"Not at my service, sir. I have nothing to do with you coming here. I am only the housekeeper, and I want you to understand that if it wasn't that I am paid well for my services, double what I could get anywhere else, in fact, I wouldn't stay here an hour. Come!"

Mrs. Fernald spoke so savagely that Old King Brady did not attempt to reply.

"You two better stay here," he said to his partners. "I will tackle this mysterious man alone."

So Harry and Alice established themselves in two piazza chairs and prepared for a long wait.

Mrs. Fernald led the way up a broad staircase, and pointed to a door on the left of a wide corridor.

"He occupies all the rooms on that side," she said. "The rooms are all locked. If you can get any answer out of him you will be doing more than I was ever able to but once, and then he nearly bit my head off for disturbing him. I swore then I would never do it again."

"I am not afraid of him," said Old King Brady, and he rapped briskly on the door.

There was no response.

Old King Brady tried it twice on that door, and then on each of the others on the same side.

The result was the same in each case.

Nothing doing.

Mrs. Fernald stood leaning against the bannisters regarding him with a sarcastic smile.

"Mr. Dusenberg! Mr. Dusenberg!" shouted Old King Brady, knocking again. "My name is Brady! I am the detective, you sent for! I am here."

No answer.

"You see?" said Mrs. Fernald. "You don't make out no better than no one else, old man. He won't answer. He won't come out neither till he gets good and ready. Oh, he's a great one, I tell you."



"Do you suppose he is in there?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Sure he's in there," replied the woman. "He never goes nowhere except when he runs down to New York on his yacht. He used to go quite often before Miss Victoria went to California, but since then he hasn't been but two or three times."

"Ah!" said Old King Brady, determined to jolly the woman. "I suppose things were better when his daughter was at home."

"Were they?" sneered Mrs. Fernald. "Mebbe you think so. I don't. I was glad enough to get rid of her, dear knows."

"Why, what was the matter with her?" demanded the old detective.

Mrs. Fernald screwed up her face.

"Oh, don't ask me!" she cried. "Mad, I guess! It's enough to make anyone mad living in this lonely house with such a crank. No, thank you, I don't wish her back again. I greatly prefer things as they are."

"When did you see Mr. Dusenber last?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Day before yesterday," was the reply.

"But don't he come to his meals?"

"Bless you, he never comes to no meals.. I put what he eats on a tray and leave it on that table. When he gets good and ready he opens the door and gets it. If he has any orders to give he writes them out and leaves them on the tray. That's the way the letter to you came to be mailed."

"Oh! You mailed the letter?"

"Yes."

"In it he agreed to send his yacht for us, but it never came."

"No? Well, it lies at the pier under the hill."

"You haven't seen him since?"

"No."

"But he has had his meals?"

"Yes. I put his lunch on the table at one o'clock. You can see for yourself that it is gone now."

"But what on earth does he do shut in there all the time?"

"Don't ask me, old man. I'll never tell you."

"But does he never come out and walk about the house and grounds?"

"Oh, yes, sometimes he does. Sometimes he works in the garden. Once in a while he goes fishing, but you can never get him to talk to anyone except about the business of the house."

"Is he pleasant at such times? Does he find fault?"

"Never finds no fault with nothing. He is that liberal that it would make you tired. 'Buy what you like, cook what you like, Mrs. Fernald,' he has said many a time. 'It is all one to me, only don't bother me and expect me to do things different from my way of doing them, that's all I ask.'"

"What rooms are there on the other side of the corridor?"

"Them's Miss Victoria's rooms. They have been shut ever since she went away. Want to see them?"

"Certainly not now. My business is with Mr. Dusenber, if I can get at him."

"If you can get at him. That's well put. All the same, old man, he's liable to walk out of any one of them doors any minute. You can't tell nothing at all about it. But I must get back to my work. You can do what you please here for all I care."

Thus saying, Mrs. Fernald hustled away.

Old King Brady stood puzzled.

What course to take he did not know.

He knocked again and shouted a few times, after which he went down to the piazza to consult his partners.

"And what do you propose to do?" demanded Harry after Old King Brady had told his story of failure.

"You ask me too much," was the reply. "Really, I don't know what to do. What would you advise?"

"Of course we can break in. These Fernalds seem to have given you free lance."

"But I scarcely like to do that."

"Naturally not, but we have come a long way just to be balked by an eccentric in the end."

"That is certainly so."

"If you could get a look in at his windows," suggested Alice.

"I was thinking of that. The front room overlooks this piazza."

"I could easy climb up on the roof if he wouldn't shoot a fellow out of the window," remarked Harry.

"From the account of the housekeeper I should imagine that the man was harmless enough," replied the old detective. "But you don't have to do that. There is a window at the end of the piazza through which you can get out on the roof."

"Let's try it, Governor. I don't like the idea of being balked so."

"Let us first walk around the house and take in the place," replied Old King Brady. "We will return in about fifteen minutes and tackle the door contract again."

Followed by his partners, Old King Brady led the way around the big stone house.

The garden in front did not amount to anything, owing to the trees, but in the rear there were no trees, and it was laid out in vegetable and flower borders right to the edge of the bluff.

But it wore a neglected look, and evidently experienced no regular care.

Along the edge of the bluff, instead of the stone wall, which came up against it on both sides, ran a high picket fence which cut off the superb view over the Sound to a considerable extent.

Here there was a gate, and outside a flight of wooden steps leading down to a little cove, where a small pier ran out.

Lying at the pier was a small steam yacht, a well-constructed and expensive affair.

Everything appeared to be in order on the deck, as it should be in a yacht out of commission.

The name could be seen on the stern. It was the "Alpine Rose."

"There's the yacht we didn't get," remarked Harry.

"Hush!" breathed Alice, laying a hand on his arm. "Here comes that girl again!"

Nina Fernald was coming towards them down the walk.



"Ma says if you want to see the yacht you can, and I'm to give you the key to the gate," she called.

"We will take it in later, thank you," said Old King Brady. "Just now it is Mr. Dusenbergl we want to see."

"Huh!" cried the girl. "You might wait here a week and not see him. Ma told me to tell you that if you didn't want to see the yacht you better come into the dining room and she will fix you up something to eat."

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE MIDNIGHT APPOINTMENT.

Old King Brady declined the proffered refreshment.

"Tell your mother we had our dinner before we left New York," he said. "We are going to make another attempt to see Mr. Dusenbergl in a few minutes. Meanwhile we are just looking around."

"Mebbe you'll see him and mebbe you won't," replied Nina. "You can never tell."

"And so you are a female detective?" she added suddenly, fixing her eyes on Alice. "I wish I was one instead of living my lonely life here."

"There are more places than this to live in, my dear," replied Alice. "But I want to talk to you a minute."

Separating herself from the Bradys she joined the girl, and they walked away together.

"What's struck Alice?" questioned Harry.

"Blest if I know," replied Old King Brady. "She's got something up her sleeve. Let her alone. She may worm something worth knowing out of the girl."

They walked on around the house, discovering nothing of further interest.

"While Alice is gone I think we may as well tackle those doors again," said Old King Brady. "I had just as soon she wouldn't mix up with this singular man. Had I known what sort of a person he was I should not have allowed her to come"

"If you could have stopped her!"

"True; that is not always so easy. But let us go upstairs again, Harry, and see what we can do."

"What they did was to hammer on the doors and call to Mr. Dusenbergl, but there was no response."

Old King Brady now raised the window overlooking the piazza.

They passed out upon the roof and had a look at Mr. Dusenbergl's windows.

Both were closed, and the shades were drawn down in front of them.

"Is the man a salamander that he can stay shut in there this hot weather?" questioned Old King Brady.

"But he is not there, of course," he added. "Whatever this mystery really means you can't make me believe that any sensible man in a place like this would lock himself up in his room for days together."

"Perhaps he is not a sensible man," replied Harry.

Old King Brady went to one of the windows and tried to raise it.

It was fastened and would not budge.

"Come!" cried the old detective. "I propose to see

the inside of those rooms if it takes a leg. Get out your skeleton keys, Harry, and we will tackle that door."

They climbed in through the window again, and there was Alice just coming upstairs.

"I have been talking with that girl," she said. "Neither she nor her mother ever entered these rooms. This man sweeps and dusts, makes his own bed, and does all the caretaking of the rooms himself. Sometimes he doesn't touch his tray of food for days together. Of course he has some way of getting out that they know nothing about. He doesn't stay in there all the time."

"You are certainly right," replied Old King Brady. "But we propose to put that theory to the test now."

Harry produced his skeleton keys.

"This door is bolted on the inside and there is a key in the lock," remarked Old King Brady, trying the door of the front room.

"Perhaps it is different with one of the others," said Harry.

There were three doors on that side of the corridor, and Young King Brady moved to the next one, stooped and examined the keyhole.

"No key in here," he said.

Old King Brady tried the door.

"Nor is it bolted," he added. "I think you can probably make it go here, Harry."

Young King Brady tried his skeleton keys.

Meanwhile the old detective kept his ear pressed against the panel ready to detect any sound within the room.

"Ready!" said Harry at last. "This key will work!"

"Stand back out of the way, Alice," whispered Old King Brady. "Now then, Harry, let her go."

And Harry turned the key, throwing open the door.

Beyond lay a well-furnished bedroom.

It was as dark as closed blinds and drawn shades could make it, and had a shut-up, musty smell.

"Mr. Dusenbergl!" cried Old King Brady.

There was no answer.

They stepped into the room.

The bed was made up and the room in fairly good order but unswept and dusty.

Doors opened off from it right and left, communicating with the front and back rooms.

Both were untenanted.

The front room was well furnished and evidently intended for a sitting room.

It contained many books, ranged on shelves; there were handsome framed engravings on the walls.

It was a comfortable room, but to all appearance it had not been occupied for some time.

The back room was fitted up as a workshop, with carpenter's and cabinet-making tools, and a place for developing photographs, with the necessary chemicals on shelves.

Five fine cameras were in evidence, but everything was deep in dust and bore no evidence of recent use.

"It is as you say, Alice," remarked Old King Brady. "This man locking himself in here is a mere pretence. He has some way of getting out which Mrs. Fernald knows nothing about."

They walked back into the front room.



Here upon a table lay the tray with the dinner upon it. Apparently the food had been scarcely touched.

"Oh, look here!" cried Harry, taking a sealed letter off the tray. "Addressed to you, Governor. Come, we are getting down to business at last."

Across the envelope was written in a bold hand with a gold pen:

"For Old King Brady."

The old detective tore open the envelope and read aloud as follows:

"Mr. Brady.

"Dear Sir:—This for you if you display enterprise enough to come in answer to my call.

"1. I regret that business has compelled my absence.

"2. I regret that I was unable to send the yacht as promised.

"3. I shall return somewhere around midnight.

"4. Neither you nor anyone else will see me when I come.

"5. I desire to accompany you to New York in my yacht, the Alpine Rose. Will you kindly see that it is put in commission. Mrs. F. will explain the process.

"6. Arrange to sup with me in the cabin at midnight, and I shall endeavor to be on hand.

"Faithfully yours,

"H. J. DUSENBERG."

"Written by an Englishman," said Harry.

"Not a doubt of it," added the old detective.

"Shall you follow his instructions?" asked Alice.

"And trust ourselves on the water with such a man?" questioned the old detective. "Well, let me think. It involves a risk, of course, but inasmuch as the captain and crew of the Alpine Rose are local people I see no reason why we should not accept the risk. Let us consult Mrs. Fernald."

There was a bell-pull against the wall, and Old King Brady worked it

In a few minutes the housekeeper came toiling up the stairs.

She seemed somewhat startled when she saw the detectives in her master's rooms.

"Did you break in here?" she asked.

"Opened the door with a false key," replied Old King Brady. "Evidently we were expected. You have been in here before?"

"Oh, yes, two or three times. The boss is not here?"

"No, Mrs. Fernald."

"He must have some other way of getting out than by the door, then."

"So it would seem. Do you know of any other way?"

"No, I don't."

"Do you know his writing?"

"Sure."

"Look at this letter. Tell me if you think Mr. Dusenberg wrote it."

"He sure did, and yet——"

"Well?"

"It don't look just like his writing either."

"Mrs. Fernald!"

"Well, sir?"

"How did you happen to enter Mr. Dusenberg's service?"

"He advertised for a housekeeper and I answered."

"I see. Read that letter, please."

"Read it to me, Mr. Brady. I have left my glasses down stairs."

Uncertain whether the woman could read or not, Old King Brady complied.

"Well, that's just like him," said Mrs. Fernald. "He does just exactly as he pleases, and never does anything like anybody else. There won't be no trouble in getting the yacht ready. All you have to do is to telephone Captain Knapp, up to Medhurst. It only takes about three hours for him to get ready for a trip."

"And the engineer, the steward, the crew?"

"They all live in town. There is no steward. Joe Brown's the cook. He attends to all that."

"And the engineer?"

"He's Mr. Hanly. He stands ready any time, night or day."

"Does he live at Medhurst with his family?"

"Yes. In a little cottage right near the hotel. But we have a direct wire to Captain Knapp's. He's the man to call up."

"And Mr. Dusenberg goes to all this expense just for a few trips?"

"That's what he does."

"He keeps these people under full pay?"

"All the time. I tell you, old man, he's the most liberal one you ever seen."

"We carry out these orders," said Old King Brady. "Where's the telephone?"

Mrs. Fernald conducted him to it, and Old King Brady called up the captain.

Clearly what the woman had said was true.

The old detective merely gave the name of Brady, and stated that he was acting under Mr. Dusenberg's orders.

"That's all right, sir!" came the bluff response. "Mr. Dusenberg notified me to take your order. When do you wish to sail?"

"About midnight."

"I can have her ready inside of two hours of you wish."

"Midnight is Mr. Dusenberg's time."

"Very good, sir. Give yourself no further concern in the matter. Everything will be attended to."

Old King Brady rang off, impressed with the idea that whatever else could be said about Mr. Dusenberg, he was certainly a man of system.

He returned to the rooms upstairs where Harry and Alice had remained.

"Without disturbing anything we have been looking around here in a general way wondering if we could strike a secret panel," remarked Harry.

"Find anything, then?"

"No. There is nothing of the sort in evidence."

"All the same, I have no doubt that it exists, and that there are secret rooms in this house. But we will go by the card and disturb nothing as yet. The yacht captain, one Knapp, has been ordered to take my orders it seems. According to the programme we will sail from here at midnight. Now let us lock up and inspect the yacht."



They got the key of the gate from Mrs. Fernald, who was particular in her instructions that nobody should be allowed to use it but themselves.

"Not that any of Captain Knapp's people would try," she added. "But then they might take a notion. Don't let them, that's all."

"What about the ground floor rooms here, Mrs. Fernald?" demanded the old detective abruptly, changing the subject.

"Want to see them?" asked the housekeeper. "You can if you like. I want you to see everything now that you are here, not that there is much to see, though."

She led them through the spacious apartments on the ground floor.

It looked as if an attempt had been made to furnish these rooms in expensive, modern style, but that it had been abandoned.

The work was but half finished.

One big sitting room was in shape, while in the other rooms the furniture had not been placed, and everything was in confusion.

"What is the cause of all this?" demanded Old King Brady. "Why was this work never done?"

"Oh, I don't know," was the reply. "Miss Victoria and her father were all the time scrapping. She wasn't satisfied with the things he bought, and he would buy what she wanted, so there you are. Everything has been just as you see it since we came here."

The Bradys now started to examine the yacht.

Opening the gate, they descended the long flight of steps which led down to the pier.

The bank was not just a mass of sand and gravel as is the case with most of these Long Island headlands, but was overgrown with stunted trees and bushes.

The yacht proved to be a little gem in her way.

Mrs. Fernald supplied the detectives with a key to the cabin, and while they were examining the perfect appointments of the dainty little craft they heard a noise on deck.

It proved to be three men who had come down from Medhurst in a boat.

They belonged to the crew, and they at once went to work to clean up and get the yacht in commission.

The Bradys now retired, and re-entering their carryall, spent the afternoon in driving about the country.

They dined at the Medhurst hotel, and in the evening the landlord himself drove them down to Mr. Dusenbergs, taking back the team.

Mrs. Fernald reported that nothing had been seen of the master of the house, so the Bradys went aboard the Alpine Arrow, and the housekeeper locked the gate behind them.

It had been a day of peculiar experiences, and the Bradys wondered what was coming next.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE MEETING ON THE ALPINE ROSE.

The Bradys and Alice were received on board the Alpine Rose by a bluff old fellow with a grizzled beard, who introduced himself as Captain Knapp.

Old King Brady had some talk with the man, but he

did not succeed in learning anything which shed additional light on the character and history of the eccentric Mr. Dusenbergs.

But the captain's talk fully confirmed what they had already learned.

The man was a complete mystery.

Just who he was or where he came from nobody seemed to know.

Certainly Captain Knapp was to be commended for his able handling of the yacht question.

Here was the Alpine Rose fully equipped and ready for business.

The captain declared that he could get her ready in an hour and a half at a pinch, although he preferred a little more leeway.

The Bradys put in the evening playing cards with Alice in the cabin.

As midnight approached all went on deck and waited for the coming of Mr. Dusenbergs.

It was a perfect summer's night; Alice declared that the Sound looked just too lovely for anything.

Probably Harry thought so too, for he kept close at her side and they looked off over the water together.

When Old King Brady saw his partner's arm steal around Alice's waist, he himself stole away, and taking a seat astern, proceeded to smoke.

For the old detective knows a thing or two, and is fully aware that where two are company three are a crowd.

Well he knows how entirely devoted Harry is to his accomplished partner.

It is the old detective's hope that they may some day marry, and doubtless they will, for Young King Brady is ready any time.

But up to the present writing it is Alice's consent which has been lacking, although it cannot be denied that her affection for Harry is sincere and deep.

So while the lovers walked forward Old King Brady remained aft.

Midnight came, and still no Mr. Dusenbergs.

Captain Knapp put in an appearance at a little after twelve and began to talk.

"You are sure he is coming, Mr. Brady?" he asked.

"I'm sure of nothing, Captain," replied the old detective. "I am only acting on orders received by letter. I never saw the man in my life."

"That so? Well, if you can make anything out of him when you do see him you will do more than I have ever been able to do. He's no talker. You can get nothing out of him. He is one of the strangest propositions I ever ran up against, but when it comes to paying, he is all right there."

"You haven't had many calls of late?"

"No. First year he used to go down to New York every Friday and come back Saturday. Then it was every two weeks, then once in a while until lately it has been hardly ever, but our pay goes on just the same. I was thinking only yesterday—but say! There he comes!"

The captain pointed to the steps.

A tall man, wearing a light overcoat, in spite of the heat of the evening, was in the act of descending.



He wore also a white felt hat, but of a lesser breadth of brim than Old King Brady's.

He came down the steps slowly, carrying a dress suit case.

Captain Knapp blew a whistle, the signal that the owner was coming aboard, and every man hurried to his place.

It was the captain himself who received Mr. Dusenber.

The man exchanged a few words with him, and then looking about, walked astern, where Old King Brady sat.

The old detective arose to greet him.

It was not altogether easy to see the man's face, for he wore his hat pulled down over his eyes.

"This is Old King Brady I presume?" he said as he approached.

"It is," was the reply, "and you are Mr. Dusenber?"

"I am. Are you ready to accompany me to New York, Mr. Brady?"

"Yes."

"Very good. We will start at once. Oh, captain!"

"Yes, sir!" responded Captain Knapp, hurrying up.

"You have everything in readiness for a start, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then cause the Alpine Rose to be started."

"Yes, sir."

Exit Captain Knapp.

Mr. Dusenber put down his dress suit case, and seated himself on a camp stool.

"I don't see your partners, Mr. Brady," he muttered. "I understand that three of you usually operate together."

"Yes. Young King Brady and Miss Montgomery. They are here."

"Yes? That is very interesting. I trust you have been well treated by my people."

"We have been shown every attention."

"I see you broke into my private apartments."

"I plead guilty to the charge, Mr. Dusenber."

"Just so. I was sure you would when you discovered that I was not in evidence. Indeed, if you had not I should have had no use for you. I want workers. People who have life enough in them to do something. This was my little test of your character. It flatters my judgment to find that it all turned out as I supposed, and hoped it would."

"It is very good of you to say so, Mr. Dusenber."

"Yes," replied Dusenber, yawning and covering his mouth with his hand. "But I see the captain is getting under way. Suppose we adjourn to the cabin and dine?"

"Very well. I will introduce my partners first," replied Old King Brady.

He then made a sign to Harry and Alice, who were waiting to be called, and they were introduced.

Mr. Dusenber was languidly polite.

His manner and accent were English, but not to a marked extent.

They descended to the cabin, where Mr. Dusenber removed his hat and overcoat.

He was rather a stylish-looking man, and well dressed.

His eyes were keen and piercing, and his hair iron-grey.

Naturally the Bradys were all attention in the matter of his personal appearance.

How they sized him up will be seen later.

There were four staterooms in the little cabin.

"Just enough to go around," Mr. Dusenber remarked.

He threw the doors wide open and told Alice to make her selection, remarking that it had never been his custom to reserve one special room to himself, and that he had no choice.

This done, he put his dress suit case in the room opposite, and told the Bradys to settle the other two between them, which being done, he touched an electric bell.

Joe Brown, the cook, appeared in answer.

"Let dinner be served," ordered Mr. Dusenber, and they seated themselves at the table, which was already set.

Brown then served an excellent course dinner.

When the roast was brought on Mr. Dusenber ordered him to place everything else on the sideboard and withdraw.

"You will not be wanted again to-night, steward," he said. "It will be time enough to clean up here in the early morning."

Brown departed.

Mr. Dusenber arose and locked the door.

"I am accustomed to waiting upon myself, and you will permit me to wait on you," he said. "It is growing late, and we may as well get down to business. You are prepared to take up my case?"

"Not until I have heard what the nature of the case is," replied Old King Brady decidedly. "It is quite unusual for us to go this far without some knowledge of the facts, but we have made an exception in your case."

"You shall know all," said Mr. Dusenber. "What I want you for, gentlemen, is to find my daughter and to bring her to my house. This may not prove altogether an easy matter. I shall now proceed to explain."

The Bradys waited expectantly during a brief pause.

"I am an Englishman by birth," began Mr. Dusenber, "although I bear a Dutch name. Most of my life has been spent in China. There I accumulated considerable money, and there I married. My wife, who is now dead, had Chinese blood in her veins, on her mother's side, her grandmother being a full-blooded Chinese woman. We had one child, a daughter, Victoria, by name. From her infancy she developed strong Chinese characteristics. She learned the language from her Chinese nurse and her mother's people. While she was a child I did not interfere, but after her mother's death I tried to break it up. In this I failed. Victoria was then seventeen. She had secretly become enamored with a young Chinaman, a bank clerk, a dwarf, who even now, that he is twenty years old, looks like a boy. He is an exceedingly bright proposition. His name is Ah Chin. Among his own people he is known as Little Ah Chin. But excuse me a moment. Let me remove the dishes and place the desert."

"Harry, relieve Mr. Dusenber of that," said Old King Brady.



"No! No! I beg to be allowed to have my own way," protested Mr. Dusenbergh. "Keep your seat, young man. It is a fad of mine to do just as I please."

He arose, removed the dishes and placed the desert on the table.

Then reseating himself, the conversation was resumed.

"In order to break up this affair of my daughter's," continued Mr. Dusenbergh, "I sold out in China and came to New York, where I was wholly unacquainted. I bought that old place on the bluff and shut my daughter in."

"I thought I was succeeding admirably, but Victoria pined under the seclusion. Fearing for her health, I consented that she should visit my brother's family in California, where she went some six months ago."

"The outcome of this piece of folly was anything but what I hoped for. Victoria, it appears, had been corresponding secretly with Little Ah Chin right along. The fellow was in San Francisco. They met and were married. A few weeks ago, as I am informed, they came to New York together; they are now living somewhere in Chinatown. To me the whole affair is heart-breaking. I am afraid to go into Chinatown, as this Ah Chin belongs to several powerful societies, and I fear if I stir him up I shall be assassinated. I am prepared to buy him off, for a large sum. I understand that you are very closely in touch with the Chinese in New York, and that you are in every way the detectives best adapted to handle such a case. If I can once get Victoria into my hands I can manage the rest. The work which I have laid out for you is simple. All you have to do is to find my daughter, inveigle her aboard my yacht, and I will then take hold; for this I am prepared to pay \$4,000 in addition to the retainer which I have already placed in your hands. Now then, those are the facts. Will you undertake the case?"

Harry and Alice awaited the reply of their chief with considerable curiosity.

Such a case is entirely out of the Bradys' line.

Under ordinary circumstances Old King Brady would have emphatically said no, but it was not so in this case.

He hesitated for a second only and then replied:

"Why yes, Mr. Dusenbergh, we will undertake your case."

"Good!" said the master of the Alpine Rose. "I was sure you would, and I am equally sure that you will succeed."

"But can you give us no clew to where we are likely to find this Little Ah Chin?"

"None. That is for you to discover. Chinatown is not so large. Of course, however, they may not be living there. I understand that there is another Chinese settlement in Brooklyn. There are others in Jersey City and Newark, of course. What you want to do is to jump in and locate this fellow and my daughter. It may take some days, but when you have accomplished it we will confer and see what can be done about getting Victoria away from her husband. While the search is in progress I propose to remain here on board this yacht so you will know where to put your finger on me anytime."

"Very well," said Old King Brady. "We shall go ahead on those lines. Do you imagine that your daughter will refuse to leave her husband?"

"Doubtless she will unless she has already had enough of him, in which case you will earn your money easily. That remains to be proved."

"And is there anything further to be said?"

"No, I am not aware that there is."

"Then with your permission, Mr. Dusenbergh, I propose to retire, for it is growing late. I think my partners are of the same mind."

They were.

Mr. Dusenbergh seemed to be perfectly indifferent about the matter.

So after a brief talk on general topics Alice retired to her stateroom and a few minutes later Harry and his chief followed her example, choosing to take a room together.

It was some time before the lights in the cabin went out.

As soon as they were extinguished and Harry, who was in the upper berth, heard the door of the stateroom opposite shut, he bent down and called in a low voice:

"Governor! Are you asleep?"

"Not yet, Harry."

"Can we talk?"

"Sure, but only in the lowest whispers. Better postpone it until morning."

"Just one question."

"Well?"

"What do you think of that man?"

"Briefly that he is a man disguised."

"Right," replied Old King Brady emphatically. "That is just what he is."

## CHAPTER V.

### OLD KING BRADY'S SUSPICIONS AROUSED.

From the very first moment he laid eyes upon Mr. Dusenbergh Old King Brady saw that his gray hair was a wig, that his face had been painted, that his moustache was false—these and other things.

Not but what the work had been skillfully done, and would have deceived the average observer every time.

But the Bradys were no average observers.

Harry and Alice saw just what their chief saw.

But what did it mean?

Not until they found themselves clear of the Alpine Rose did the Bradys dare discuss the matter.

When Harry awoke it was eight o'clock, and the yacht was lying off Liberty Island.

Old King Brady had left the stateroom.

Harry hurriedly dressed, and going on deck found Alice and his chief already there ahead of him.

"When do we have breakfast?" he asked.

"Word has just been given me that it will be served in half an hour," replied Old King Brady, "but as Mr. Dusenbergh does not propose to join us, suppose we go ashore at once?"

Harry assented.

Old King Brady spoke to the captain and they were landed on the Battery by two of the yacht's crew.



They at once proceeded to a well-known restaurant and ordered breakfast.

Free to talk at last, Old King Brady opened up.

"This is a very singular thing," he said. "Of course both of you saw through that man's disguise. I should feel ashamed of you if you had not, and yet it was no ordinary botch makeup. But what can be his purpose? That is what perplexes me."

"Do you imagine he is the real Dusenberg?" demanded Alice.

"That he is not is the first and most natural thought. And yet what reason have we to doubt it? On all sides we were told that Dusenberg is an eccentric. We have practically proved that proposition for ourselves. Now, no man becomes an eccentric except for cause. What is the cause in this case? We want to get at the root of this business. Because it is all so irregular I agreed to take up his ridiculous case, which I certainly would not have consented to do for any other reason. My belief is that this may lead to some explanation of the mystery, for mystery it certainly is."

"I suppose that was the way you figured it out," replied Harry. But what do you propose to do first?"

"Alice and you to Chinatown. I to work on my own lines. First thing is to find out if this little Ah Chin is known. Once that has been ascertained we shall know better what to do."

This was sound reasoning, and Alice was logically the person for the work.

For Alice is a very remarkable linguist, speaking all the more important European languages.

In addition to this, what is more remarkable still, she both speaks and reads that most difficult of all languages, Chinese.

This Alice acquired in her childhood, for she was born and brought up in China.

Needless to say, this unusual accomplishment has been of the greatest service to Alice in connection with her detective work.

"I accept the commission," she said. "Harry and I will undertake to locate Little Ah Chin at once."

"If he is known at all in Chinatown I have no doubt you will succeed," replied Old King Brady. "So go right at it. As for me, I have other fish to fry."

Thus immediately after breakfast the detectives separated.

Alice and Harry went at once to Chinatown to make a few preliminary inquiries.

At this time the Bradys numbered among their Chinese acquaintances a certain banker named Deck Wong.

For this man they had successfully managed a case of considerable importance.

The banker professed to be very grateful.

Harry's suggestion was that they now put his gratitude to a test.

So turning up Mott street he and Alice entered Deck Wong's shabby little office, which was half filled by a large safe.

Nor was the safe empty by any means.

Deck Wong did a heavy business among his countrymen.

Like most Chinamen, he professed to trust to steel walls and bars rather than to put his cash in the hands of a "Melican" bank.

It is hard to blame him, considering the style in which so many "Melican" banks are handled in these days.

Deck Wong came forward at once as the detectives entered.

It was:

"How do, Hally! How do, Miss Mlontglomelly." He was all smiles.

But as soon as Harry told him he wanted help in a Chinese case he looked grave.

Then it was:

"Me belly solly. Me no can do muchee. Me evleyblody's flend. Dlat business. Me no can give my people away."

"Hear what we want first," said Harry. "Perhaps you don't know; perhaps you won't mind telling."

"Allee light, Hally. Go ahead," replied the banker, and Harry sprang Little Ah Chin on him.

If the juvenile looking Chinaman had really been in the banking business this was a good shop to apply for information, it seemed.

Deck Wong did not immediately reply, but at last he got a move on.

"Dlat feller was here," he said, "but me no see him ddis long time, Hally."

"You know him?"

"Yair."

"And where do you suppose he is?"

"Mebbe he go Bloston, Chicago, Slan Flancisco, how me can tell?"

Alice got a secret sign then.

The Bradys have a regular code of these signs.

This one said:

"Go for him in Chinese."

Alice immediately took up the ball.

Harry watched her with profound admiration.

He would have given much to have known what was passing between them.

At last Alice, breaking into English, said:

"Well, all right, Deck Wong, I shall depend upon you to make good that promise."

"Allee light!" replied the banker with a bland smile. "You comee 'moller—see?"

"No to-morrow about it!" cried Alice. "Don't you fool us, Deck Wong! You said to-night."

"Oh, sure. Me makee meestake. Me mean to-night, Miss Mlontglomelly. So long."

It was time to pull out, and Harry meekly followed Alice from the Chinese bank.

"Well, what's the word?" he demanded when they reached the street.

"Unsatisfactory and puzzling," replied Alice. "He admitted that he knows Little Ah Chin. He says that he is a criminal who robbed a bank in China, that detectives have been after him before, and that is why he lies low. I asked him about the fellow's white wife, and he denies that there is any such person. He says that he does not believe that Little Ah Chin is married. Lastly he said that if he is in Chinatown at all he is in hiding in some of the secret dens, and that it will be a most difficult matter to find him."



"And your appointment for to-night spells what?"

"Oh, I told him he must help us to find the man, and he finally said that if we would call around this evening he would have a Chinaman here who acts as a sort of detective for the On Leong Tong, the business man's society, to look into the doings of the Hip Sing Tong, or Highbinders Society; he seemed to think that probably the fellow could help us out."

"And are we to come disguised as Chinamen?"

"Not at all; on the contrary, he said that we must not try anything like that, for if we were discovered it would get both him and the Chinese detective into trouble."

"Well, upon my word, I think that's pretty good for a starter!" exclaimed Harry. "I only hope the Governor does as well this P. M. We will ring off for the present, and to-night we will be on deck again."

Meanwhile Old King Brady had been doing nothing but wait.

The scene of his inaction was the big cafe under the Eastern Hotel at the foot of Whitehall street.

Being perfectly familiar to the place, Old King Brady could have stood around there all the morning and no one would have said anything to him.

As it was, he waited until nearly eleven o'clock, when Captain Knapp of the Alpine Rose walked in.

This was the old detective's appointment, for he had slipped a note to the captain before leaving the yacht.

"Ha! So you are here!" he exclaimed. "I began to think that you were not going to favor me with this visit."

"Why I got away as soon as I could," replied the captain. "Couldn't leave till I had seen the boss, you know. He told me that he should not pull out to-day, and so getting shore leave, here I am, and wondering what it is you want, Mr. Brady."

Of course the first thing was to find out what the captain wanted at the bar.

This done, Old King Brady got him into a corner and started up his information pump.

"It was a very singular case Dusenbergs gave me," he said. "He tells me that his daughter is lost in Chinatown; that he has reason to believe she has married a Chink. Can you believe this? You have seen the young lady, I am told."

"Why, yes. I've seen her lots of times," replied Captain Knapp. "Between ourselves, she looks as though she might be part Chinese. A most peculiar person, Mr. Brady. But then her father is that."

"Captain, do you believe that man we dined with last night is Victoria Dusenbergs's father?" demanded Old King Brady, abruptly.

The captain at once shot him a peculiar look.

"Why, I don't know," he said. "I don't know what to think or what to say. Of course it isn't my business."

"Hold on! Let me put it to you in another way. Mr. Dusenbergs has always used you well?"

"Most liberal gent I ever sailed for. Couldn't ask for a better."

"And you would do anything to serve him?"

"Anything in the world."

"Then serve him now by telling me just what you

think of that man you brought down from Medhurst last night."

"Mr. Brady, he's different from what he was. There now, it's out! I don't understand it. He has changed, and he had the last time I brought him down."

"When was that?"

"Two weeks ago."

"You say he has changed. Just what do you mean?"

"Well, I don't know just what I do mean. He's different, that's all."

"Do you mean that he looks differently?"

"Yes, and acts different. His voice is not the same. I didn't dare speak of this to anybody, but I noticed it. Say, I thought something was the matter with me, but since you noticed it——"

"How could I tell about this difference, captain, when I never saw the man before in my life, but since you have decided to be frank with me I'll tell you something; that man wears a wig, he wears a false moustache; his face is painted. Was it so with your Mr. Dusenbergs at first?"

"No, by Jove, it wasn't! You are dead right, Mr. Brady. I see it all now!"

"You agree with me!"

"I sure do."

"And yet this man looks very much like Mr. Dusenbergs?"

"He sure does."

Then he added:

"But, Mr. Brady, what do you mean by all this?"

"I don't know myself," replied the old detective, "but if you really are as devoted to Mr. Dusenbergs as you say I advise you to keep a sharp lookout. It may be that this man has him a prisoner somewhere, and that he is taking his place in the world!"

"By Jove! If I thought so——"

"Go slow, captain. There is nothing to be gained by haste. Just keep your eyes open, that's all, and let me know what you discover. Where is our man now?"

"I left him aboard still in bed."

"Ha! Another point! Did the Mr. Dusenbergs you first knew dine at midnight and sleep on his yacht all day?"

"No, by Jove, he didn't."

"Take it easy! Any show of excitement may ruin all. You know where my office is?"

"No, Mr. Brady, I don't."

"Then here is my card. If you have anything to report come to me. If I am out, speak freely to either of my partners. If we are all out, leave a note."

And after Captain Knapp had attended to another case "before the bar," they separated.

Thus it will be seen that Old King Brady's suspicions of his singular host were fully aroused.

That he was soon to have them confirmed the next chapter will show.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE BRADYS MAKE A NIGHT TRIP TO CHINATOWN.

Old King Brady's next call was at the bank upon which was written the check sent him as a retainer by the hermit of Medhurst.



Here he readily obtained an interview with the cashier, with whom he was personally acquainted.

A conversation regarding Dusenbergs followed, Old King Brady stating the case freely.

"Why, we know nothing very definite about this man, as I believe you were informed over the telephone by the paying teller," said the cashier. "He has left a small account here for the past two years. At the start he did some stock speculating, but lately the account has not been active. I haven't seen Mr. Dusenbergs in three months. I know nothing for or against the man."

"How large is his account?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Between twelve and fifteen thousand," was the reply. "I can give you the exact balance if you wish."

"It is not necessary. Kindly examine this check. It is the one he sent me. I should like your opinion of the signature."

The cashier studied the check attentively.

"I do not consider myself competent to pass upon this," he said. "It certainly looks like Mr. Dusenbergs's signature, but you can see for yourself that it is one easily imitated."

"I see that."

"Have you any reason to believe that the man you met on the yacht is personating Dusenbergs?"

"My suspicions have been aroused. I am working on the supposition that the man may be a fraud."

"Let us call in the teller. He is a particularly shrewd proposition, especially in the matter of signatures. I should like to hear his opinion."

The paying teller was called.

Not a word was spoken by Old King Brady. The cashier simply handed him the check.

The teller took about two minutes to study it.

"Forgery," he then said, emphatically. "Very cleverly done, but certainly a forgery."

And such was the result of Old King Brady's visit to the bank.

Fully confirmed in his suspicions now he went to his office.

Harry was there, but Alice was out.

Old King Brady seated himself at his desk and told what he had learned.

"But who can this man be?" questioned Harry. "What can be his object in inveigling us to Medhurst and putting this case in our hands?"

"Give it up," replied Old King Brady. "I don't pretend to follow his curves; but I have no longer any doubt that he is personating H. J. Dusenbergs. But what did you and Alice accomplish?"

Harry told of the interview with Deck Wong.

"I doubt if anything comes of this," said Old King Brady. "However, we shall see."

"Will you go, too?"

"Yes; I think I shall. No objection, is there?"

"None that I know of."

"Where is Alice?"

"Governess. I don't know where she is. I am feeling bothered about her."

"What do you mean?"

"Why she left me abruptly at the corner of Pell street and the Bowery. I haven't seen her since."

"Pshaw, Harry! You are entirely too sensitive. Probably she had business to attend to."

"That's what she said. But she as good as told me that she didn't want my company. Usually she says where she is going. I never knew her to act so. Didn't you notice a strange reserve about her after she talked privately with that Fernald girl yesterday?"

"Now Harry, have sense. Alice does not have to make you her father confessor, nor me either, for that matter. If the girl had anything to tell her of a private nature I am perfectly willing to leave it to Alice's own judgment whether she tells me or not, and you should feel the same way."

"Oh, I know; it wasn't so much what she did as the way she did it that bothered me."

"The girl may have sworn her to secrecy. If Alice gave her promise not to talk, she will keep it, that's all."

"Well, I can only hope that Alice has not given any promise which will take her alone into the secret dens of Chinatown."

"And even so, she is not a fool, and is much better able to take care of herself in such a case than any other woman in New York."

And thus emphatically Old King Brady cut short the discussion.

But secretly he was troubled.

He had noticed a peculiar reserve about Alice, who usually is frankness itself.

It began after the private interview with Nina Fernald.

That she was holding back something after that he felt sure.

His idea was that in due time Alice would turn up and explain all.

But she did not.

The day passed and Alice failed to put in an appearance.

In the early evening Harry called up her boarding house, on Waverly place, but it was only to learn that Alice had not been there since the day before.

Both the Bradys were now seriously disturbed, but Old King Brady would not admit how much troubled he really felt, for he had Harry on his hands, who was constantly fretting over the situation.

And thus came the time of the appointment at Deck Wong's, and Alice not on hand to keep it.

The Bradys decided to go ahead without her.

Thus at the time named they turned up on Mott street, prepared to do the best they could.

It began with a disappointment.

Deck Wong was not on hand.

Instead he had left a letter.

But, unfortunately, the letter was in Chinese!

That was the time the Bradys missed Alice.

There were several men in the bank, but all were strangers to the detectives, and all professed to be unable to speak English, as most Chinamen do when they don't want to talk.



Old King Brady could get nothing out of them, so he took the letter and went away.

"Here's a bad job," growled Harry. "What a lot of trouble would have been saved if Alice had only spoken out."

"You cut it out," said Old King Brady. "Don't say another word. We have work to do to-night, and it must be attended to—that's all. We will consult Quong Lee."

Now Quong Lee is the keeper of an opium joint on Chatham Square.

He is Old King Brady's one particular friend in Chinatown.

Years ago the old detective did this man a good turn, which he has never forgotten, and from that hour Quong Lee has ever held himself ready to return the service, and has done so many times.

Old Quong was found in his little office down in the cellar. It was not necessary for the Bradys to go into the dive.

"Here's something for you to read, Quong," said the old detective. "Miss Montgomery is away to-night, so we have to bother you."

Quong Lee put on a pair of big-rimmed horn spectacles and looked over the paper.

"Well, well! You are in luck, Mister Blady!" he exclaimed. "You see slometing to-night vat you never see."

"So? And what it that?" demanded the old detective. Quong drew him aside and lowering his voice said:

"You ever hear tell of the hide house in Chinatown?"

"Never! One of your secret dens?"

"Oh, yair, many sleect dens, you know. Dlis mostee sleect of all. Me nebber tell you 'bout dlis. Me nebber see mineownself. Dlis letter show you."

"But tell me what you mean by the hide house."

"Mean what I say. Anybody wantee hide in Chinatown dlen dley pay money and dley get hided—see?"

"Ah, ha! Men who owe money and can't pay on the Chinese New Year's day when you fellows always settle up your bills."

"Yair. Dlat and if dley flaid of the Highbinders—any old fling. It's de hide house. Dlat's where dley hide."

This was beautifully indefinite.

But every now and then something new turns up in relation to the secret dens of Chinatown.

This was certainly a new one on the Bradys.

Seeing that they were not expected to ask any further questions on this subject, Old King Brady inquired how the letter read.

Quong Lee's rendering of its contents in English was too confused to be put into words.

But the Bradys got their cue.

It would appear that Deck Wong really meant to meet them.

The letter directed them to go to a certain number on Pell street and knock on the door of the back room, top floor.

There they were to give a password, which would have been intelligible enough to Alice no doubt, but it took Quong Lee a good ten minutes to teach Harry to repeat it so that it would be understood.

Thanking the diskeeper, the Bradys withdrew, and

put in the time until ten o'clock in wandering about Chinatown in the hope of seeing something of Alice.

Disappointed in this they turned up at the Pell street house at the appointed time.

It was one of the older tenements on the south side of the street, three stories above the store floor, upon which was a Chinese grocery, with a fan-tan joint in the cellar.

The detectives toiled to the top of the house and knocked upon the designated door.

The answer was prompt.

A Chink far advanced in years, with a heavy, drooping white moustache opened the door.

The Bradys were disappointed.

These old Chinese rarely speak English, while at the present day there are many young men in the Chinese colony who speak it as well as anyone.

"What wantee?" growled the old fellow, holding the door almost shut and peering through the crack.

Harry gave the password.

"Where gal?" demanded the man, evidently far from satisfied.

"She could not come, John," replied Harry.

The old man gave a grunt, banged the door shut, and turned the key.

"Barred out! I was afraid it would be so," grumbled Harry. "What are we to do now?"

"Wait," said Old King Brady. "You have given the password—I hope it was correct."

"It was what Quong Lee gave me."

"Was it? Well, as I have forgotten it already I can't say. However, we can't break in on these people if we expect to gain a favor from them. All we can do is to wait."

They did wait nearly fifteen minutes.

At last footsteps were heard on the stairs and a very stylish young Chink put in an appearance.

He looked the Bradys over searchingly and inquired what they wanted there.

"We came from Deck Wong," said Harry, "and he repeated the password."

"That's all right," said the young man. "Did you knock on the door?"

"Yes, an old man opened it, and when I gave him the password he slammed the door."

"So? There was to be a lady who speaks Chinese."

"She couldn't come."

"So? He expected her. He does not speak English. I suppose he thought he would wait till I came. It's all right. You are the Brady detectives?"

"We are."

"Well, you shall have what Deck Wong promised you, but if you give us away to the police you may expect trouble."

"As we shall not give you away there will be no trouble on that account."

"All right. You will have to be blindfolded—see?"

"That will be all right," spoke up Old King Brady, "but tellus your name since you know us."

"Never mind my name," replied the young man with a grin. "This is all secret business, and names better be left out."



"But——"

"Now, see here, Boss Brady, you have just got to do this thing the way I want you to do it or not at all."

"Oh, very well," said the old detective. "Let it be so. Go ahead."

The Chinaman rapped on the door in a peculiar way. It was immediately opened by the old man.

An animated conversation passed between the two.

The old fellow seemed extremely unwilling to give up his point, but he did so at last and the Bradys were ushered into the room, which was very comfortably furnished in the Chinese style.

There was no one present but these two.

"Do you go with us?" demanded Harry.

"Yes," replied the young man. "It isn't my business, it's his, and if the lady had come I should not have butted in, but as it is I shall have to go, I suppose, or you will be getting into trouble surest thing. Stay where you are till I return."

He placed chairs and passed into another room.

As soon as he had departed the old fellow got busy.

All Chinamen are extremely hospitable.

This man made tea and served it to the Bradys in tiny cups.

With it came candied fruit and a kind of seed cake; also cigars.

At the risk of being drugged the Bradys ate, drank and smoked, for it would not do to offend their aged host.

Meanwhile half an hour passed, but the younger man did not return.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PRISONERS IN THE SECRET DENS.

It was three-quarters of an hour before the young Chinaman came out of the other room.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting so long, but I could not help it," he said. "But here I am at last, and if you are ready we will go along."

"We are ready," replied Old King Brady. "You understand what it is we are after?"

"Sure. You want to find out if Little Ah Chin is in Chinatown."

"Yes, and to see him."

"You shall see him."

"He is here in New York then?"

"Now, look here, Boss, don't ask me questions. I am acting under orders, but I have no orders to answer your questions. You want to see Little Ah Chin. Well, you shall see him. That's all I can say."

"All right," answered Old King Brady. "Go ahead."

"You are to be blindfolded, you know."

"Yes; I haven't forgotten what you said. Go ahead."

The Chinaman produced two big silk handkerchiefs.

One he tied over Old King Brady's eyes, the other over Harry's.

"Now hold on to each other," he said. "Boss Brady, give me your hand."

It was done, and the detectives became aware that they were led into the other room.

Here the old dodge of turning them round and round several times was gone through with.

They were then left to themselves for a minute, after which their conductor put Old King Brady's hands on the rounds of a ladder and told him to ascend.

They came out into the open—it was the roof, of course.

At length they were taken down a ladder, and then down a long flight of very narrow stairs.

That this was a secret staircase leading from roof to cellar they could not doubt.

At last they halted in a damp, foul-smelling enclosure.

"Now stand still as you are till I return," said their conductor.

Perhaps he went away, but the Bradys could not hear him go.

As the detectives had agreed between themselves to keep faith with their conductor no attempt was made to peep.

At last the young Chink suddenly caught hold of Old King Brady's hand again.

"Come on," he said. "The way is clear now."

Again they moved forward.

And now the Bradys lost their bearings completely.

This was no doubt intended.

It was up and down, in and out.

They seemed to pass through low doors, for they were told several times to duck their heads.

Then it would be up steps, along in a straight line, down steps, around in a circle, and so on until they became completely bewildered.

At last they were backed against a wall and the bandages about their eyes removed.

They now found themselves alone with the young Chinaman in a room of considerable size.

It was to all appearance without windows or doors, and the walls were circular.

The room was also bare of furniture save for a number of Chinese scrolls hanging against the wall.

"Now, Boss Brady," said the young Chink, "let me tell you that you find yourself in one of the most secret places in Chinatown. So far as I know you are the only white men who ever entered here."

"And what comes next?" demanded Old King Brady, as the Chinaman paused. "Do we get a sight of Little Ah Chin?"

"That depends upon whether he is here or not," was the reply. "I can't tell that. I have obeyed orders and brought you here. I shall show you all there is to be seen, but what you may see I don't know."

"Very good. Go ahead."

"Are you sure there is nothing else you wish to see but what you said?"

"We want to see and talk to Little Ah Chin, my friend. That's what we are here for."

"To see and talk with him? I have no orders to let you talk with him. I could not bring that about if I tried."

"But what good will it be for us to see him if we can't talk. Be reasonable."

"I go by my orders," replied the Chinaman stubbornly.



And Old King Brady knew that it would be useless to attempt to move him.

He felt that they had been fooled by Deck Wong, but it was too late to help it now.

"Go on; finish up your work and get us out of here," he said.

The Chinaman crouched on the floor.

And now the Bradys noticed that set in the floor were six round panels, or covers, each with a brass ring attached.

These were ranged in two rows.

The young Chinaman pulled each up by its ring and said:

"Now look for yourselves and see all there is going. If what you see does not suit you that is something I can't help."

Below each little trap door—they were about as big as a barrel head—was a panel of glass.

We should have mentioned that the Chinaman carried an ordinary stable lantern.

This he turned down to a mere glimmer before opening the first trap door.

Its light was no longer needed.

From each opening light came streaming up into the round room.

Filled with curiosity, the Bradys looked through these singular peep-holes.

Was it all one room below, or were there six different rooms?

This was not easily decided.

In the one into which Old King Brady looked first he saw four Chinamen sitting around a table playing cards.

But it was no Chinese game.

Evidently they were playing poker.

In the room were six bunks, and the place was well enough furnished.

Clearly this must be Quong Lee's "hide house."

It looked as if these Chinamen lived down there.

Through the peep-hole which Harry chose was to be seen quite a large party playing fantan.

Fifteen men were gathered about the table.

Harry looked for Little Ah Chin, but he could not make out that any of these Chinamen were under size.

They moved on, looking down through the next two panes.

The room into which Old King Brady looked was quite luxuriously furnished.

In it was only one person, a Chinaman, who lay undressed upon a bamboo couch with a pongee silk robe gathered about him.

He appeared to be asleep, and an opium pipe lying upon a low stool beside a little lamp was explanation enough of the cause.

This seemed to be a private apartment in the hiding house—a star chamber, so to speak.

Harry through his pane got a party at dinner.

Four men were seated about a table, while a fifth acted as waiter.

The men were working their chop-sticks for all they were worth.

Harry stepped to the next and last pane on his side.

Old King Brady moved along at the same moment.

Both simultaneously exclaimed:

"Look here, Governor," said Harry.

"Just a second," replied Old King Brady, quietly.

"But this must be Little Ah Chin."

"Indeed! That's interesting!"

Old King Brady moved alongside of Harry and looked down.

The room was evidently an opium joint, but a small one.

There were two bunks; in the top one lay a Chinaman asleep.

Paper lanterns hung about, there was a staircase, and alongside of it was a low bamboo stool upon which sat a dwarfish Chinaman asleep.

His head was thrown back against the stairs, and he clutched an opium pipe in his left hand.

His features were regular, and for a Chinaman he was decidedly good looking.

He was dressed in complete Chinese costume, even to the round silk skull cap, which the Chinamen in New York so seldom wear.

"What do you think of him?" demanded Harry.

"Certainly he would seem to fill the bill," was the reply. "Looks as if he might be Little Ah Chin."

"Shall I ask the man?"

"Just a minute, Harry. You want to look down this other peep-hole. Prepare for a surprise."

"Not Alice?" gasped Harry.

"Yes, Alice! Take it easy now!"

And sure enough this is what had startled the old detective into exclaiming as he did.

There in the room below was Alice seated on a Chinese stool.

She was in her usual dress, and did not appear to be at all disturbed.

Opposite, stretched upon a bamboo couch, was a thin, cadaverous looking white man.

On the edge of the couch sat Nina Fernald, with the man's arm about her waist.

"By thunder!" breathed Harry.

"Alice!"

"Yes; and that girl. I told you so, Governor."

"Yes; but look at the man!"

"In a general way he looks like Dusenbergs."

"If he isn't the real Dusenbergs I'll go out of the detective business forever."

"Evidently Alice has stolen a march on us in this case."

"It would seem so."

"She ought to have told us."

"That she had the best of reasons for not doing so I feel sure."

"Shall we try to attract her attention? None of these people seem to be aware that there are peep-holes in their ceiling."

"No, no!" said Old King Brady. "We must see what the man has to say."

All this talk was in whispers.

The detectives turned now to their conductor.

He stood there holding the lantern eying them in an amused way.

"Well, did you see all you wanted to?" he asked.

"We have seen enough," replied the old detective.



"This man down here under this hole—this dwarf. Is he Little Ah Chin?"

"I suppose so, if he is a dwarf. I haven't looked."

"Look then."

The Chinaman looked down through the hole to which Old King Brady pointed.

"Yes, that is the man they call Little Ah Chin," he said.

"What is he wanted for?"

"I don't know that he is wanted at all, if you mean by the police. I want to talk to him, however. If you can fix that I will pay you well."

"Those are not my orders. I would like to have your money well enough, Boss Brady, but I cannot go outside of my orders."

"Right, and I respect you for it, my friend. Well, we have seen enough. Let us go." Old King Brady had thought first to show him Alice and the Fernald girl, and to ask how they came to be there, but he concluded not to attempt to interfere until he knew what Alice's game was.

The Chinaman now closed the little floor panels and turned up his lantern.

"I shall have to blindfold you again, gentlemen," he said.

"All right," replied Old King Brady. "Go ahead."

The eye bandages were retied.

"Come," said the man, taking Old King Brady's hand.

He led him forward.

The Bradys, closely observing, heard a secret panel open and close behind them after they had passed through.

They did their best to trace their return; to get hold of something which would give them a clew if they ever came to travel the same road again.

But in this they failed.

Within a minute or two they found themselves as much mixed up as ever.

All at once the Chinaman let go Old King Brady's hand, giving a sharp exclamation as he did so.

Then all in the same instant a revolver shot was fired. Another instantly followed.

There were cries in Chinese.

A door slammed.

All this before the Bradys could make a move.

They tore off the handkerchiefs from their eyes.

But they stood in the dark.

"What in thunder is it?" cried Harry, whipping out a revolver.

Old King Brady flashed his little electric lantern, for it was necessary to have light upon the subject first thing. They stood alone in just such another circular room as they had left.

Indeed, for the moment, Old King Brady thought it was the same room.

But there were no panels in the floor and the mottoes on the wall were certainly different.

Their conductor had vanished.

There was neither door nor window.

For half an hour the detectives worked trying to find some means of escape.

But at last the true situation began to be painfully apparent.

They were prisoners in the secret den of Chinatown.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### NINA TAKES ALICE INTO THE SECRET DENS.

At the time Alice went away with Nina Fernald it will be remembered that Old King Brady remarked that she had something up her sleeve.

This was true only in part.

Alice had no other motive in leaving her partners than that the girl had made a sign that she wanted to speak privately with her.

Thus Alice followed her and they talked.

"Help me, Miss Montgomery. I am in deep trouble," Nina said as soon as they were out of hearing.

"Why certainly, my dear, I'll help you if I can," replied Alice, moved to sympathy by the earnestness of the girl's manner. "What is your trouble then?"

"Oh, I can't possibly tell you now," said the girl, "but understand it deeply concerns Mr. Dusenbergh. I will tell you all, but I cannot tell those men. I must have a talk with you first. Promise me upon your sacred honor that you will not tell them what I have said."

"I promise," replied Alice, feeling that what she had already heard amounted to nothing. "But talk freely. I tell you once more I will help you if I can."

"Oh, I cannot talk now. If my mother sees us talking together she will kill me. If you will meet me in New York to-morrow I will tell you all. Perhaps when we have had our talk I shall be willing that you should tell all I say to these Bradys; but not now! Not now!"

"All right."

"Will you meet me?"

"Certainly, if you wish it—where?"

"I will tell you only on condition that you promise me not to say one word to the Bradys till we have had our talk."

Foolishly, perhaps, Alice gave the promise.

Her curiosity was aroused.

So was her ambition.

"If I can get in ahead on this case through this girl it will be a feather in my cap!" she thought.

Nina then gave her a number on the lower Bowery.

"Strange as it may seem to you," she said, "I have a room there. I shall be there at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon. Meet me and I will tell you a lot about this business which I don't believe you will ever find out in any way except through me."

And Alice renewed her promise, the girl leaving her then.

She was sorry afterward, and much of a mind to tell Old King Brady, but somehow she could not bring herself to go back on her promise to the girl.

So Alice kept silent, hoping devoutly that she would not regret it.

After leaving Harry, Alice had business of her own to attend to which occupied the remainder of the morning.

But before starting to attend to this she visited the



number on the Bowery which Nina Fernald had given her.

It was one of the older buildings below Canal street.

On the ground floor was a gentleman's furnishing store. Upstairs there were rooms to rent.

Alice ascended to the room indicated.

The door was locked, and her knock brought no response.

It looked as if the girl had been sincere and might keep her appointment at the time named.

And at three o'clock Alice again ascended those stairs and knocked on the door.

This time it was promptly opened by Nina herself.

She threw her arms about Alice's neck and kissed her.

"Oh, you came, Miss Montgomery!" she cried. "I am so glad. Come right in. This is but a poor place, but I shall be very differently fixed some day. I hope then I may be able to receive you in respectable shape. Oh, my dear, you can't imagine what a fancy I took to you from the very first minute I laid eyes on you! You are so beautiful. You look so good to me."

"Hysterical!" thought Alice. "I wonder what it is all about?"

It was just a little furnished bedroom into which she entered.

Nina placed the only chair for her, and she seated herself on the bed.

An elevated train went rushing past.

The noise over, the girl began again.

"Now, Miss Montgomery, tell me, did that man go to New York with you on the Alpine Rose last night?"

"If you mean Mr. Dusenbergh, yes," replied Alice.

"He is not Mr. Dusenbergh!" cried the girl, her eyes flashing.

"Not Mr. Dusenbergh?"

"No!"

"Then who is he?"

"I don't know. Some kind of a fraud."

"But——"

"Oh, I know! I know what I am talking about, Miss Montgomery. Do you want to know what I know?"

"Yes, tell me."

"Because a woman ought to know her own husband, ought she not?"

Alice had thoughts of this among other things, so it did not come altogether as a surprise.

"So you are married to Mr. Dusenbergh," she said. "Does your mother know?"

"Indeed she does not!" cried Nina. "My mother and I are on the dead outs. She has her way of thinking, and I have mine. She thought she was going to catch Mr. Dusenbergh herself, but that's where she got left."

"Does she suspect that this man is not Mr. Dusenbergh?"

"No, I don't think so. She's half blind anyway. But let me tell you all about it, my dear."

"Go right on. Talk freely."

Alice thought she was going to get it all now.

She got nothing!

Suddenly Nina gave a piercing scream, and sprang upon the bed.

"What on earth is the matter?" cried Alice.

"Oh, the mouse! The mouse!" cried Nina, gathering her skirts about her.

And sure enough a mouse was creeping along the bare boards on the other side of the room.

"Shoo!" cried Alice, stamping her foot.

The mouse turned and vanished into its hole.

Nina began laughing wildly.

Next minute she was crying.

Alice found herself with a bad case of hysterics on her hands.

But this was not the worst of it.

"Oh, I can't tell you a thing now," sobbed Nina when at last she began to regain control of herself. "It's too bad! Too bad!"

"What in the world ails you, my dear? The mouse is gone. It wouldn't have hurt you anyway. Do try to be calm," Alice said.

"Oh, it isn't that!"

"What then?"

"I found it so hard last night to make up my mind what to do, so I left it all to the mouse."

"She is away off," thought Alice.

"Explain yourself," she said aloud.

"Why you see that mouse has bothered me before," replied Nina, "so I swore to myself that if it showed up before I had told you I wouldn't tell, but if it didn't, I would. I can't go back on that."

"Now look here, don't you think that is just a bit silly?"

"Perhaps it is, but that's what I am going to do. Never mind, Miss Montgomery, I don't want to make a mistake. If you will have patience with me I'll take you to Mr. Dusenbergh to-night, and whatever he says will go, if indeed he is in shape to say anything, poor man."

"Is he sick?"

"He smokes opium all the time."

"Ah, I see! Where is he?"

"Hiding in a secret room in Chinatown, but he will see me."

"Let us go there at once and settle the matter."

"No; I can't go there until eleven o'clock to-night. That is why I keep this room. My mother thinks I am visiting a friend, and this is where I stay when I am not with my husband."

Alice tried all her powers of persuasion to make the girl talk, but it was no use.

Realizing that she had to deal with a person but a little better than half-witted, Alice determined to stick close to her and see the thing through.

Nina wanted to go to a vaudeville theatre, and Alice took her.

Afterwards they had supper together, and in the evening it was another show.

The girl's silly laugh wearied Alice terribly, but she had to stand for it.

Still she could not but admire her persistency.

Although she brought her around to the subject again and again Nina always sheered off.

"I won't tell you a thing till I consult my husband," she said each time Alice tackled her.

And all on account of a mouse!



So Alice had to study patience.

At all events she would see the real Mr. Dusenbergs and learn what it was all about, she thought.

And having started all this in her own way, Alice was just stubborn enough not to attempt to communicate with the Bradys. She resolved to put the matter through herself.

At half-past ten Alice and Nina started up Pell street.

The girl took her to the same house where the Bradys went a little later, conducting her to the same room on the top floor.

Here they were met by the old Chinaman, who seemed to know Nina.

"You wantee see your man?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied Nina. "I want you to take me to my husband. This lady is a friend of mine. She goes too."

"Allee light," replied the old fellow. "Me takee you to Little Ah Chin. Me see what he say about odder gal."

Nina flew into a rage.

"No, no!" she cried. "I don't want anything to do with Little Ah Chin! Is he here again? I thought he had gone away."

"He here! Me takee you," replied the Chinaman stubbornly.

There was more talk.

At last Nina yielded.

The old fellow then proceeded to blindfold both of them.

"Don't be afraid," said Nina, "this is the way they do things here. No harm will come of this."

Alice assured her that she was not afraid, and the Chinaman led them over the roofs, down the secret stairs and through the passages until at last they came into a small room where there were two opium bunks.

It was the room in which the Bradys looked down upon Little Ah Chin.

"You stay here," the old fellow then said to Alice.

He opened a door and beckoned to Nina to follow; the handkerchiefs had now been removed from their eyes.

"I suppose we shall have to do as we are told or we'll be made to," said Nina. "But never mind, Mr. Dusenbergs will fix it. It won't be for long."

She followed the old man out of the room.

She had scarcely gone when the door opened and the little Chinaman came in.

It was the same Little Ah Chin the Bradys later saw through the peep-hole.

He was in full Chinese costume, and looked like a mere boy.

His eyes were dull and heavy, and Alice saw that he had been hitting the pipe.

"Who are you? Why do you come here?" he demanded in good English.

"I am a friend of the lady who has just gone inside," replied Alice. "I came here because she wanted me to, that's all."

"What's your name?"

"Alice. What's yours?"

"My name is Ah Chin. Of course she told you, but you have not told me all your name."

"Alice is enough."

"No."

"I say yes. I don't know you."

The little Chink gave her a most peculiar look.

"He knows me," thought Alice. "I must be on my guard."

"So you won't tell me your other name," persisted Little Ah Chin.

"No, I won't. I don't know what right you have to question me."

"No right. Suit yourself. I don't care what you do."

"I don't care whether you care or not. I am only waiting here for my friend."

"Your friend!" mused the little man. "Do you know who she is?"

"I think I do."

"Well, you don't."

"What do you mean?"

"Never mind. If you won't talk to me I won't talk to you."

"Oh, suit yourself about that," retorted Alice, and she turned away.

Little Ah Chin glared at her and went out.

"He is so badly doped that he don't know what he is talking about," thought Alice. "I wonder if he lives with Mr. Dusenbergs's daughter here?"

Ten or fifteen minutes passed.

Little Ah Chin then came back again.

He had an opium pipe, a lamp, and some of the deadly hop stuck on a playing card in the Chinese style.

Seating himself on the low stool where the Bradys saw him, he prepared his pipe and began to smoke without paying the least attention to Alice.

After a few draws he laid down the pipe, and leaning his head back against the partition, went to sleep.

A few minutes later Nina came into the room.

"Asleep!" she whispered, looking at Little Ah Chin.

"Yes," replied Alice. He seems to be."

"Were you talking to him?"

"Yes."

"About what?"

"He wanted me to tell him my name, but I wouldn't."

"That's right. It's none of his business. Come."

"To Mr. Dusenbergs?"

"Yes. He will see you now."

And Alice followed this singular girl through the door.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WORKING IN THE SECRET DENS.

The room into which Nina took Alice was the one in which the Bradys saw them through the peep-hole.

Upon a bamboo couch lay what had once been a man.

One glance was enough to show Alice that she was in the presence of a confirmed opium fiend of the worst description.

That he bore a strong resemblance to the man they had known as Dusenbergs was certain, but he would hardly have passed for his duplicate now, so hollow were his cheeks and so red his eyes. Indeed, his whole frame seemed to have wasted away.



But he was no dead man by any means.

Nina sat down on the side of the couch and the hop-  
land partially arose and threw his arms about her waist.

"See, this is my wife," he said. "She has told me who  
you are. We will not speak your name here."

"And are you Mr. Dusenberg," replied Alice.

She could not refrain from shuddering.

There was something horribly repulsive about this old  
drug-user.

It was just at this minute that Old King Brady looked  
down upon her from above.

"Yes, I am Mr. Dusenberg," replied the man. "Listen!  
You are shrewd while this poor girl is not. You  
saw that little Chinaman in the other room?"

"Yes."

"Do you think he is really asleep or was he only sham-  
ming?"

"I never saw the man before. I would not undertake  
to say."

"Listen! Open the door suddenly and see if he is out-  
side. Go on tiptoe. Softly!"

Alice did as requested.

Suddenly throwing open the door she could see nobody,  
and so reported.

"Right," said Mr. Dusenberg. "Now come here."

Alice came close to the couch.

"Can you hear me when I speak low?" demanded  
Dusenberg, in a smothered whisper.

"Yes."

"Then let me talk. Nina was going to tell you my  
story. She did not. It is just as well, but you shall know  
all soon. Your Mr. O. K. B. Is he open to a good  
thing?"

"Ah, ha!" thought Alice. "Now the cat is out of the  
bag. He wants to bribe us. But I'll lead him on."

"He certainly is," she replied.

"I thought so. Listen! I am a prisoner here. I have  
been here so long smoking opium that I have lost all run  
of time. Meanwhile that man has taken my place. You  
saw him. O. K. B. saw him. What do you both think?"

"Of the man? We don't know who or what he is."

"Then let me tell you. He is an English detective, I  
have no doubt. He wants me. If I go back there he will  
get me. And yet I must go back there or I'm a dead  
man. If you will go and tell O. K. B. that you saw me;  
tell him to hire a yacht and to find some means of getting  
me out of here and privately and on board. I will pay  
him fifty thousand dollars in cold cash for that service if  
he will stand by me and ask no questions. What I want  
is to get away to South America with this poor girl, who  
has been fool enough to marry me. Once I can get away  
I will cut the opium out and never touch it again. Will  
you do this?"

"Yes," replied Alice. "I will put it up to O. K. B."

"Do you think he will do it?"

"I think he will. But you must be frank with us. You  
are wanted for what?"

"I will tell you all on the yacht."

"Who keeps you a prisoner here?"

"That little Chinaman—Little Ah Chin, they call him.  
He is my son-in-law. He is married to my daughter. He  
is a deep, dangerous man."

"Is your daughter here?"

"No. I don't know where she is, and don't care. I  
never want to see her again. Now, miss, you have heard  
all I have to say. Do this and the money is sure. But we  
must dodge this man—this detective."

"Do you know his name?"

"No. It makes no difference. He goes under many  
names. He is a shrewd, dangerous man; but Little Ah  
Chin is just as bad."

"Why does he keep you here?"

"I will tell you on the yacht."

"You want to go to your place at Medhurst, I sup-  
pose?"

"Yes. I must go there. I—ha! I hear some one out-  
side the door!"

"No; it is only fancy," said Nina, who had never re-  
moved her eyes from her husband. She seemed to be  
perfectly fascinated with the man.

"I'll see," whispered Alice.

Again she tiptoed to the door and flung it open.

There was no mistake this time.

There, on his knees, was Little Ah Chin.

He had been listening at the keyhole.

Mr. Dusenberg staggered to his feet.

"You yellow rascal!" he cried. "Oh, if I only had the  
strength to serve you as you deserve!"

Little Ah Chin got up coolly.

"But you haven't, papa," he sneered. "Come, so you  
are plotting to escape, eh? We'll see; we'll see!"

He waddled off up the passage, passing through a door,  
which he slammed behind him.

Mr. Dusenberg began to cry, after the manner of opium  
fiends.

"Oh, there's no help! There is no help!" he sobbed.  
"You'll never get out of here now, Miss Montgomery.  
He'll not let Nina come to me any more. I know just  
how it will be."

"Brace up!" said Alice. "Nina, let us go now. We  
will put this to the test."

"Heaven grant that you may escape!" said Dusenberg.  
"Don't forget. If Old King Brady can't help me nobody  
can. I am told that he has great influence with the Chi-  
nese. This is called the hiding house. Remember. As I  
came in blindfolded, I can't tell you how to get here. I  
suppose he will have to get the help of the police; but  
tell him to stand by me and the money I promise is sure.  
I had sooner trust to him than—that—but, there! I'll  
say no more. Nina, ring the bell."

There was a bellpull near the door and Nina worked it.  
For some time there was no answer.

Meanwhile the husband and wife conversed in whis-  
pers too low for even Alice to hear.

At last the door opened and a big, brutal-looking Chi-  
naman appeared.

Alice recognized him instantly as one See Yek, a noto-  
rious Highbinder.

Once in one of their Chinese cases it had served Old  
King Brady's purpose to use this man as a spy, and as he  
always is with such people, the old detective had been  
exceedingly liberal with him.

That the man knew her Alice instantly saw.

"We want to go, Yek," said Nina.



"Little Ah Chin say no go yet," growled the Chink.

"They must go!" cried Mr. Dusenbergh. "Tell Ah Chin if he don't let them go I'll take an overdose and kill myself. He knows what that will mean to him."

Alice tackled the man in Chinese, much to the astonishment of all.

"You know me," she said. "I am working for Old King Brady. He is interested in this business. Help me out of this and you know what you will get."

"Come out here in the passage. I want to talk to you," replied See Yek. "Let the other girl stay here."

"I want to speak to this man alone, Nina; I know him," said Alice. "You stay here."

"How did you learn to speak Chinese?" demanded Mr. Dusenbergh, suspiciously.

"Oh, I learned in China," replied Alice.

"In China! When were you in China?"

"I was born there. I have not been there for some years."

"Oh!"

The exclamation came with a sigh of relief.

Alice went out into the passage and closed the door.

"Listen!" said See Yek. "You are not the only prisoner here in the hide house, Miss Alice; there are two more upstairs. Can they be Old King Brady and Mr. Harry, think?"

Of course, Alice had no means of knowing.

But she was not missing the chance.

"May be," she said. "Can I see them?"

"Sure. What is it? Do you want to get the old man away?"

"See Yek, we do. If you can help Old King Brady will make it right with you."

"I will! I hate that little rat, with all the airs he puts on! I'll help, Miss Alice, but I can only go so far."

"What do you mean?"

"If I can get you out without getting myself into any trouble, why, all right; but if I run up against the boss I'm done."

"Little Ah Chin, you mean?"

"No, no! Not Little Chin. The boss of this house. No matter what his name is. I mustn't tell. Will you come with me now? We must be quick!"

"Wait till I tell her," said Alice, pointing to the door.

"She must not come."

"No; she will not. That's all right. I understand."

Alice slipped back into the room.

"Mr. Dusenbergh, would you go now if you can get the chance?" she asked.

"Now? I—I don't know. I'm afraid——"

"Of what? To show yourself in Chinatown? We can get a carriage. You can go right to Old King Brady's house."

The miserable wreck was trembling all over.

"What is it all about?" he asked. "I was not prepared for this."

"I know this man Yek. He has promised to help me. But I must go. Think of it. I will come back as soon as I can."

"Oh, go, Harry! Go!" pleaded Nina.

"Talk to him," said Alice, and away she went.

"You stop too long!" grumbled See Yek. "Every minute counts."

"I am ready now," replied Alice. "Lead on!"

See Yek took up the lantern, which he had brought into the room with him, and hurried to the end of the passage.

Pressing a secret spring, a panel flew back, revealing secret stairs.

"Come! Keep close behind me!" he whispered.

"Do I shut the panel?" demanded Alice.

"No; leave it open. Come!"

Alice hurried after him.

She could hear the Chinaman counting the stairs to himself.

At the eleventh stair he stopped, pressed his hand against the wall and a little, round panel flew back, leaving a peephole.

See Yek put the lantern so that the light would strike through and peered in.

"Yes. It is Old King Brady and Mr. Harry," he said. "I didn't know. We must have them out. Stop here. You are not afraid in the dark?"

"No, no, Yek! I'll do anything you say."

The Chinaman ran on up the stairs.

The light vanished and all was still.

Alice grasped for the peephole, found it and called:

"Mr. Brady! Harry!"

"Why, Alice! You here?" Harry cried.

"Yes. Help is at hand. Look out for See Yek, the Highbinder! You remember him?"

"Indeed I do remember him!" replied Old King Brady. "And we will do well to look out for the rascal. I—but, hush! Some one is here now."

Light flashed through the peephole.

Three minutes later See Yek, followed by the Bradys, came down the stairs.

"I got them," chuckled the Chink.

He closed the peephole and, bidding them follow, led the way back to the passage and on to the room where Alice met Little Ah Chin.

It was vacant.

"I must blindfold you all," said the Chinaman. "Perhaps I can get you out; perhaps I fall down. I don't know."

"Wait, See Yek! I want to speak to Mr. Brady a minute," said Alice.

"Every minute we wait is so much time lost," was the reply.

"But I must," said Alice.

She drew the old detective aside and hurriedly said:

"Mr. Dusenbergh—the real Dusenbergh—is being held a prisoner here. He wants us to help him to escape. Fix it with See Yek. I think it will pay."

"Fix it yourself in Chinese. His English is the very worst."

"Shall I offer him a hundred?"

"Yes, yes. Anything. You know best."

Alice turned to the Chinaman and in his own language put up the proposition.

"No," said See Yek. "Too little money. Tell Old King Brady to make it \$500 and I'll do the best I can."



"He wants \$500, Mr. Brady," said Alice. "I think Mr. Dusenbergh will pay it. I can ask him, if you wish."

"I'll go it blind on your think so, Alice. Tell him yes."

"Five hundred goes, See Yek," said Alice.

"All right. We go in there and tell him to come with his wife."

He opened the door and jumped back, for there stood Little Ah Chin.

"You traitor!" he cried, in Chinese, as he darted into the room. "I'll fix you!"

See Yek flew into a fearful passion.

"Dog! Rat! Fiend!" he cried, in Chinese.

But this was but the beginning.

What followed best remain untranslated.

Little Ah Chin gave him as good as he sent.

Suddenly See Yek made a rush for the dwarf.

Harry went for him, not wanting to see murder done.

"Hold him, Harry! Hold him!" shouted Old King Brady, throwing up his hands.

The little Chink doubled up his fists and continued to defy the enraged man.

Harry caught him around the waist and held on in spite of his struggles.

## CHAPTER X.

### RESCUED, BUT TOO LATE!

Old King Brady made short work of the business, jumping on Little Ah Chin.

He caught the dwarf under the arms and flung him into one of the bunks.

Then, covering him with his revolver, he ordered him to stay quiet unless he wanted still more trouble.

Meanwhile Alice went for See Yek in Chinese and begged him to be calm.

"Come, come!" said Old King Brady. "You are only blocking your own game by all this, Yek. If you want to earn that five hundred, get us out of here."

"Tie him up. I can't come back here now," said See Yek. "I'm done."

And the Bradys did tie up the dwarf, and, to prevent him from giving the alarm, gagged him, too.

See Yek then led Alice back to Mr. Dusenbergh.

The wretched man had dressed himself for the street.

"What is all that noise?" he demanded. "I thought Ah Chin had captured you—that you were never coming back."

"It is just the other way," replied Alice. "The Bradys have captured Little Ah Chin."

"What! I wish they would kill him! But that cannot be, of course. He must be left here. They must not try to arrest him."

"No, no! They won't," said Alice. "Come! We hope to get you out of this now."

They hurried him into the other room, Nina and Alice.

"So this is the famous Old King Brady?" said Mr. Dusenbergh, making a desperate attempt to pull himself together. "Miss Montgomery has told you my proposition—you will try to help me?"

"Yes," replied Old King Brady; "but the first thing is to get out of here. After that we will talk."

See Yek turned to Alice, and said in Chinese:

"I'm not going to blindfold you now, as I don't mean to come back here again. It will be a fight when we get to that room where you started. Tell the Bradys that."

Alice explained.

"Oh, I guess we shall be good for them if the bunch is not too big," replied the old detective. "Only let us make the start."

They started then.

See Yek led them by so many secret ways that they grew hopelessly confused.

Old King Brady was just beginning to fear that the man was deceiving them when they came out on the roofs.

Five minutes later they found themselves at a scuttle on a certain roof some doors below.

See Yek cautiously raised it.

"I shall go no further," he said. "Below lies the room. I don't know how many are asleep there. You will have to fight for yourselves."

Turning, he hurried back over the roofs, leaving his lantern.

"We'll go down ahead and clear the way, Harry," said the old detective.

He cautiously raised the scuttle and listened.

There was a ladder beneath. He could not hear a sound.

Drawing their revolvers, the Bradys descended, the old detective in the lead.

There were two Chinamen in bed in the room, one being the old man who had received Alice and Nina.

He started up, waking his companion, with a sharp cry.

Old King Brady and Harry promptly covered the pair.

"Move and you are dead Chinks!" cried the old detective.

The Chinamen sat motionless and silent, while the girls got the trembling opium wreck down the ladder.

Alice unbolted the door and all hands made quick time down onto Pell street.

"Well, here we are!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "We have had enough of the secret dens of Chinatown for one night. What time is it?"

He looked at his watch.

It was between one and two o'clock.

"Mr. Dusenbergh, the best thing you and the lady can do is to come home with me," he said. "What have you to say to that?"

"I must get in somewhere," replied the wretched man. "You have no idea what a wreck I am or how wretched I feel."

"I can imagine," was the reply. "We will engage a nighthawk cab at Chatham Square and take you to my house."

And the start was made accordingly.

The Bradys live on Washington Square, where the old detective and Harry have kept bachelors' hall now for several years, while Alice has rooms of her own on Waverly place, near by.

No sooner were they started than Alice opened up and told what Mr. Dusenbergh had offered.

"Well, my friend, and what do you mean by it?" demanded the old detective. "Fifty thousand dollars is a



great deal of money. What service can I perform for you to entitle me to so large a sum?"

"If my life can be saved you have saved it to-night," was the answer; "but why not let us wait until to-morrow before we talk business?"

"It can be done that way, I suppose; but why not answer my question now?"

"I don't want to talk. I'm not able. I have been through too much."

"Just what do you want me to do?"

"Take me home, but make sure that man who has been personating me is not there."

"Who is the man?"

"As I told Miss Montgomery, I believe him to be an English detective."

"And you are a man wanted?"

"If I wasn't would I offer so big a fee?" replied Mr. Dusenberg, sulkily.

Alice, who was most anxious to see the business carried through, was afraid that Old King Brady would break out about being bribed at this, but he did not.

For some moments he remained silent.

"I begin to understand what I am to be paid for," he said. "It is to help you to escape with stolen funds."

"Will you do it? I may as well tell you that the money in question does not belong in this country, so it is no affair of yours."

"I'll think of it," replied the old detective, coolly. "In the meantime we will say no more."

"And I am glad to hear you say that," groaned Dusenberg, "for I certainly am not in any shape to discuss the matter now."

"Mr. Dusenberg," said Old King Brady, "I have been studying your case. I know a good bit about such business. Allow me to tell you that I consider you in the greatest danger. If you will take my advice, instead of going to my house, you will consent to have me take you to the sanitarium of a doctor who makes a specialty of such cases as yours."

"I dislike to put myself in the hands of a doctor."

"As you will. You are welcome to stay at my house if you think you can be taken proper care of there. You ought to have a nurse."

"I have a good one right here," said Dusenberg, putting his arm about Nina.

"Oh, go, Henry! Please go!" pleaded Nina. "I am sure Mr. Brady knows best."

"Where is your doctor?" demanded Dusenberg.

"Over on Second avenue, near Fourteenth street."

"You will promise not to tell him my name?"

"Certainly. I will introduce you as Mr. Ferguson, a client of mine. He will ask no questions. You are perfectly safe."

"Then under those conditions I will go. I think myself it will be best."

And they went.

There was no difficulty in getting at the doctor, for it was not an uncommon thing for opium wrecks to come to his place late at night and an attendant was always on duty, night and day.

Old King Brady saw Mr. Dusenberg safely located in one of the best rooms of the sanitarium and, with Harry

and Alice, he waited in the office for the doctor's report. Dr. Farrington looked grave when he at last came downstairs.

"That's a very sick man you have brought me, Mr. Brady," he said. "I greatly doubt if he ever leaves this place alive, unless he goes at once."

"Then if you don't want him to die on your hands we will take him away," said the old detective. "I think myself he is pretty far gone."

"No; he can stay. Shall I tell his wife?"

"It will be best."

"Very well. I will do the best I can for him, but I don't hold out the least hope."

"How long do you think he will live?"

"Impossible to say. He certainly can never recover. His heart is all gone. He is liable to drop out any moment. It is scarcely possible that he will be alive three weeks hence."

The Bradys went home then.

Alice explained her part in the affair as they went.

"Chances are that man has money hidden out at Medhurst and both Little Ah Chin and that English detective are after it," said Old King Brady. "I can figure it out no other way."

"And what do you propose to do about it?" asked Harry.

"We will decide in the morning. I gave the girl my address. She promised to call me up first thing in the morning," was the reply. "We can't decide a thing to-night."

And thus ended one strenuous day.

In spite of the late hour of his retiring, Old King Brady was up at six o'clock.

Never had he been more puzzled as to what course to pursue.

But for the fact that it would ring in Mr. Dusenberg's daughter and so block the way, he would have attempted the arrest of Little Ah Chin at once.

And so he was all uncertain what to do when he sat down to breakfast with Harry.

But the way was promptly shown him, for they had scarcely finished when a cab drove up to the door and the bell rang violently.

A moment later and Julius, the Bradys' man of all work, announced "Mrs. Dusenberg."

"The man is dead!" said the old detective, looking at Harry. "Good job we didn't bring him here to the house."

"You can't be sure."

"Oh, but I am sure. You'll see that I am right."

"De lady looked lak she'd been crying, boss," said Julius.

"I'll go right up," said Old King Brady. "Show her to the library, Julius."

Julius departed.

"Harry, you get to the listening hole," said the old detective. "We want a witness to whatever is said."

But if Old King Brady expected to find himself with a weeping widow on his hands he was very greatly mistaken.

Nina it was, but she was a changed woman.

Her face was all ablaze with excitement when the old detective entered the library.



"Well, Mr. Brady, that doctor was right," she exclaimed. "Mr. Dusenbergs is dead. He died suddenly at half-past five this morning."

"Indeed!" said Old King Brady. "I was afraid of his condition last night."

"Yes; he's dead. Now you will have to work for me."

Old King Brady bowed silently.

"This woman married the wretch for his money, and nothing else," he thought. "She thinks she is going to get it all, but we shall see."

"You'll do it?" demanded Nina.

"Certainly, Mrs. Dusenbergs. But, first, you must tell us what we are expected to do."

"I have come prepared to do that," replied the girl; "but before I begin I want to tell you that the day he married me he made his will. I have it. He leaves everything to me and nothing to that mean, spiteful cat of a daughter of his."

"Mrs. Ah Chin?"

"Yes."

"You are fortunate. But now you must really tell me all, Mrs. Dusenbergs. We have been working in the dark long enough."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BRADYS DISCOVER DUSENBERG'S SECRET DEN.

To tell the whole story was something which Mrs. Nina seemed reluctant to do.

"Oh, say! I don't know that I ought to talk until I have seen some lawyer," she said.

"Suit yourself," replied Old King Brady, feeling that any urging would be fatal to his purpose.

"I suppose you will want what Henry promised you out of this?" continued Nina. "Fifty thousand dollars is a big lot of money for me."

"Very well. Go consult your lawyer," replied Old King Brady. "Meanwhile Little Ah Chin will probably get the money."

"Oh, I'll tell!" cried Nina. "I only meant that I ought to see how I stand before—before we find the money. Then there is the money in the bank. I don't care about the place. That they can't get away from me, anyhow. They can't arrest a dead man. Won't you take twenty-five thousand and help me out, Mr. Brady? Surely that's enough."

"Good morning!" said Old King Brady, rising. "I've no time to talk. I'll go and look up Little Ah Chin."

"Oh, wait! Don't be in such a hurry. I'll stand by Henry's agreement," cried Nina. "There isn't so much to tell, anyhow."

"Tell it now or never!"

"Oh, well, then all there is to it is my husband built a secret room for himself at the house. When he came to Medhurst he brought a lot of money with him. He has it hidden down there somewhere. That's all."

"Do you know where it is?"

"No. He died without telling me."

"Where did Mr. Dusenbergs come from?"

"I don't know. I don't know anything at all about it."

"Do you mean to tell me that you have no idea who this stolen money belongs to?"

"No; I haven't any idea."

"Does Little Ah Chin know?"

"Yes. He helped steal it."

"Does he know where it is hidden?"

"No, he don't. If he did know he would have gone after it long ago, I suppose."

"That is why he kept Mr. Dusenbergs a prisoner in that secret den in Chinatown?"

"Yes; to make him tell."

"This Englishman—this detective—don't you think he may have found the money?"

"I'm sure he didn't. He wouldn't have gone after you if he had found it."

"How did he find out this secret room?"

"I don't know. There was a man watching the place even before Henry went down to Chinatown. Henry was sure he was the same detective."

"That was the reason he went away?"

"One reason, I suppose. He used to go to Chinatown and smoke that stuff before. That was before Little Ah Chin came."

"Oh! Little Ah Chin has not been there right along, then?"

No. Victoria went out to San Francisco to see her friend. She met Little Ah Chin there and they came back together. He knew her before that. They were engaged to be married. They got married out there in California and came to New York."

Old King Brady pressed the girl further, but gained no other important point.

"Now you find that money and give it to me and you shall have your fifty thousand dollars," said Nina. "Come, is it a bargain?"

"I'll see what I can do," replied Old King Brady. "I'll go to Medhurst at once."

And soon after the girl went away.

Harry at once joined Old King Brady in the library.

"That woman is simply a fool!" he said.

"Right," replied the old detective. "But Little Ah Chin isn't. Neither is our Scotland Yard friend, who puts up good dinners at midnight. Dr. Farrington will have to report this death, and I can't stop him. The instant these men hear of it they will act. We better get down to that house at once and hold the fort against them. Do you know, Harry, I've got an idea?"

"What is it?"

"Remember the Secret Service case we didn't take?"

"Harbord, the defaulter of the Hong Kong bank?"

"Yes. What if Dusenbergs were the man?"

"It is an idea, certainly."

"Remember this Harbord had a daughter, who was in love with, or had married, a Chinese clerk, who helped in the defalcation—an undersized fellow of boyish appearance?"

"Little Ah Chin!"

"Exactly."

"Then this Scotland Yard detective dovetails in. I believe we have solved the mystery. Remember this money was believed to have been lifted in a lump and there is a twenty-thousand-dollar reward up for the recovery of \$100,000 or more? It is a plum worth working for. Call up Alice and tell her we are going to Medhurst. We'll chase right down to Coenties Slip and charter a tug. But



I must go to the office first. On second thought you better go to Coenties Slip and arrange for the tug. We will join you there."

And this arrangement was carried out.

Arrived at the office, Old King Brady found a letter from Captain Knapp.

It was brief and to the point, simply stating that they were still anchored off Liberty Island; that he was sure his boss was not Dusenbergs, and that a boat had been left all night at the Battery landing, waiting for the Bradys, the master of the Alpine Rose being greatly disappointed that they had not come aboard.

The letter was dated at six o'clock that morning.

This was encouraging.

It looked as if the Englishman might decide to wait over another day.

Old King Brady called up the sanitarium and learned from Dr. Farrington that Mr. Dusenbergs had died of heart failure, passing away in sleep.

All haste was made and by half-past eight the Bradys and Alice started for the Medhurst house in the tug Susan Smalley, a tight, speedy, little craft, which they had used before.

Before heading for the Sound they ran around into the East River to see if the Alpine Rose was still at her anchorage and, to their satisfaction, found that such was the case.

And now, with plenty of time on their hands to think, the Bradys reviewed the whole situation.

Old King Brady felt more firmly convinced than ever that Dusenbergs was D. J. Harbord, the defaulter; but, of course, his theory still lacked proof.

The object of the detectives in taking the tug instead of going down to Medhurst by the railroad was to avoid attracting attention in the village.

Old King Brady's plan was to take possession of the house and to bend every effort toward finding the hidden money.

Nina, it should have been explained, could not even tell them how to get into the secret room, as even after her marriage to Dusenbergs she had never been allowed to enter it, so they were all in the dark and could scarcely tell what they would have to do."

They ran into the little harbor in due time.

As it happened, no other house but the Dusenbergs mansion was visible from this point.

The tug tied up at the pier and the Bradys went ashore.

"You lay here till further orders," Old King Brady said to the captain. "If a yacht comes answer no questions. If a man on board of her claims to be the owner of the place and orders you off, run across to the other shore and tie up there. My signal for you to come back to the wharf will be three revolver shots. On no account tell any one that you landed us here."

Captain Bentley promised strict obedience and the Bradys and Alice ascended the long flight of wooden steps to the high fence, which ran along the hillside about midway between the beach and the top.

Here they tackled the gate.

It was secured by a heavy padlock of the best modern make on the inside.

There was a bellpull, and Old King Brady rang several times.

At last Mrs. Fernald appeared at the top of the steps on the inside.

"What's wanted?" she cried. "Go away! This is private property. Nobody will be let in here."

"It is I, Mrs. Fernald!" shouted the old detective. "The Bradys back again. Open the gate."

Mrs. Fernald hurried down the steps.

"What!" she cried. "You back! You have come in a tug? Where's Mr. Dusenbergs? What does this mean? I don't know whether I ought to let you in or not."

"Mr. Dusenbergs is dead," replied the old detective.

"What! What!" screamed the woman. "I don't believe it. I saw him before he went away with you last night. He was as well as ever then. His last words to me were to let no one in until he returned."

"Open the gate, Mrs. Fernald," said Old King Brady, firmly. "I have much to tell you. We must come in."

"Tell me where you are then. I shall not open the gate!"

"Well, well! As you will. Now, understand, Mrs. Fernald, the man you saw last night and have been seeing for some weeks is not Mr. Dusenbergs. He is a man who has been personating your master, who died this morning, as I tell you. This is a bad business, and unless you want to be arrested you will open the gate."

"I won't!" cried the woman. "You are playing some game on me. Until I have orders I refuse to open the gate."

And off she went up the steps.

"What are we to do?" demanded Harry. "Let that woman balk us?"

"By no means," replied Old King Brady. "I think we can find some way of getting in. Indeed I am sure of it, for I have just made a discovery which I think will prove to be of some importance. Anyway, we can saw off a few palings very readily and go through the fence."

"But your discovery?" demanded Alice, looking around.

"Can neither of you see anything?" demanded Old King Brady. "Look sharp!"

"A distinct path running off along the line of the fence to the right!" cried Harry.

"Exactly," replied the old detective. "Faint, but distinct. Now, who made it and where does it lead to? That is the question?"

"Leads to that bunch of bushes over there," said Alice.

"So it seems to me? Where is Mrs. Fernald? I can't see her. Guess she has gone back into the house. You two stay here in case she happens to be spying on us. I'll investigate."

And the old detective advanced along the path, if it could be so called, for actually it was little more than a line of footprints.

But these led directly to the bushes, which grew thick here. Old King Brady pushed his way in among them.

The old detective found himself facing a low, wooden door, set in the side of the hill.

There was a lock, but no knob. The height of the door was not more than three feet.



Old King Brady got busy with his skeleton keys, and in a few moments he had worked the lock.

Pulling back the door, he saw a bricked-up passage behind.

Old King Brady flashed his dark lantern in and saw that the passage ascended with a gentle slope.

He returned and told Harry and Aliee of his discovery.

"I suppose we follow it up at once," said Harry.

"Certainly," replied Old King Brady; "without delay."

They returned to the door and entered the passage, Old King Brady in advance.

The ascent was comparatively easy, and at length, when it seemed as if they had gone about the distance to the house, they came to its end.

Here, on their right, was another door, which they were glad enough to reach, as they had not been able to stand upright.

Directly ahead of them the passage had been closed up with new bricks.

"There you are!" said Old King Brady. "That is where the sewer came out. This door is of later build."

He found that the same key which he had used outside would open this lock and he threw back the door.

Behind were three steps, which led up into a room of considerable size and very comfortably furnished as a library and bedroom combined.

Old King Brady lighted a lamp which stood on a table and they remained looking around.

There was a bed in one corner, a lounge in another, two tables and several chairs.

Many books were ranged about the walls on shelves. The place was decidedly comfortable.

Ventilation was had by means of two large iron pipes, which ran out through the wall.

"Dusenbergs's secret den," said Old King Brady. "We must examine everything here. We may not find the money, but certainly it looks as if we were beginning to make headway at last."

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

The Bradys found no money in Dusenbergs's secret den. And if ever a search was thorough, this one was.

Every book was removed, every inch of the wall space covered, every board of the floor sounded and tried.

But it was all to no purpose, so far as the supposed-to-be-hidden cash was concerned.

But other discoveries of importance were made.

In a desk many papers were found which proved positively that Dusenberg was none other than David J. Harbord, the defaulting cashier of the Hong Kong bank.

This was sufficiently interesting, but there was another discovery made of equal importance.

This was a coat, which contained a bunch of letters in the pocket.

They all bore London postmarks and were addressed to Peter McNulty, New York.

Old King Brady, who did not hesitate to read them, was not long in discovering that McNulty was a detective connected with the Scotland Yard, and that he was

charged with running down the defaulting cashier of the Bank of Hong Kong.

They now determined to push on into the house.

Passing through a door, they ascended a long flight of narrow stairs and came upon a secret panel, the workings of which were plain enough from their side.

This led them directly into Mr. Dusenbergs's room on the second floor and from there they went downstairs to the kitchen, where they surprised Mrs. Fernald.

The housekeeper almost threw a fit when the detectives came bursting in upon her.

"Fix us up some supper, Mrs. Fernald, and I'll pay you well for it," said Old King Brady, cutting short the woman's talk. "We are here, and we propose to stay here all night, or till such time as that man who has fooled you into believing that he is Mr. Dusenberg returns."

Money won the day, as it generally does, and Mrs. Fernald put up a very good supper.

After supper Old King Brady persuaded Mrs. Fernald to give up the key of the gate, and he went aboard the tug, where he instructed the captain to pull over to the other side of the cove and anchor, so as to leave the coast clear for the yacht, which he felt confident would turn up that night.

This accomplished, the Bradys took up their quarters on the back piazza, where they could watch the cove.

And here they remained until nearly eleven o'clock before there was anything doing.

Then, all at once, the tug's whistle gave a subtle croak.

"That man is coming!" cried Old King Brady, springing up, for he had arranged with the tug captain to sound his whistle at the first sign of the yacht.

The Bradys and Alice now returned to the secret room, being fortunate enough to avoid Mrs. Fernald, who had retired to her own room.

They left all doors closed behind them.

A little later they heard footsteps descending the secret stairs.

The door was thrown open and the bogus Dusenberg stalked into the room.

That he was actually surprised was shown by the way in which he started back, but he instantly recovered himself.

"So," he exclaimed, "you went back on me completely, Mr. Brady, and now your whole firm is on hand! You are making yourselves very much at home in my private quarters, it seems."

"Just so, Brother McNulty," replied Old King Brady, with equal calmness. "We have been working on your case right along, all the same."

McNulty dropped into an easy chair.

"It is all in the line of business, Mr. Brady," he said. "Well?"

"Have you found the stolen money, of which the bulk is hidden in this room, beyond all doubt?"

"Indeed! And, if so, why didn't you find it?"

"Man, I have hunted days and nights. As to how I traced this man up and got into his shoes and his secrets, I am not going to tell you. That's my business; but—well, never mind. Have you found the cash or not?"



"Not."

"I thought not. And the man? How did you make out in the secret dens of Chinatown?"

"The man is dead."

"But when and where did he die? Tell me all about it, Brady. Did you see that Chinaman who married the daughter? Little What's-his-name—Ah Chin?"

"Yes; we saw him."

"Well?"

"Well, Mr. McNulty, you go at us just as if you expected a full report."

"And so I do."

"Well, then, you don't get it until you come out flat-footed and tell us all about your connection with this Harbord case."

"Sha'n't do it. I was willing to pay you for your service among these Chinese. I am still, if there is anything to come my way out of it; but as to giving away my methods and my work, why, not for Joe!"

"We'll see about that," replied Old King Brady. "I am glad you came, for now we understand each other; but let me tell you right now that if you had told me the truth in the first place something definite might have been obtained from this dead man. Now it is too late."

"Hark!" breathed Alice. "Surely there is some one fumbling at the secret door!"

"Out lights!" said Old King Brady. "I hear! It can be nobody but Little Ah Chin!"

He blew out the lamp as he spoke.

They retreated to the stairs, leaving the door open on the crack.

Nor were they an instant too soon.

Peering through, they saw the secret door open and a woman carrying a lantern appeared.

She looked around for an instant and then called:

"Come on, Ah! What you got out of father about the old sewer has proved correct, at all events, for here we are in the secret room. Perhaps the rest of what you considered his wild talk will also prove to be true."

And as she spoke Little Ah Chin came through the secret door.

"So this is his hiding hole!" he said. "Confound him! I am glad he is dead! He fooled me fine, and after I helped him swipe the cash, too. Only for me meeting you on the California train, Victoria, I should never have known where he was."

Hanging from the ceiling, which was of wood, suspended by means of a chain attached to a big hook, was a handsome fancy lamp.

Of course, the detectives had observed this, but they had not lighted it, as the lamp on the table answered every purpose.

Little Ah Chin pushed a chair under the lamp and climbed upon it; but he could not reach.

"Here, you try it, Victoria!" cried Little Ah Chin. "I am too short."

"It seemed time to butt in.

Old King Brady flung open the door.

"Suppose I try?" he said. "I am good and tall!"

It was an interesting climax!

As three revolvers covered the pair, there was nothing

to be said, and nothing was said for an instant, except the Chinaman's exclamation:

"The Bradys!"

"Yes. The Bradys and Scotland Yard combined!" cried McNulty. "An invincible team. The handcuffs for yours, little man!"

The "little man" showed fight, but Harry kept him covered, and the handcuffs went on.

Victoria gave a scream then and went into hysterics. Old King Brady got on the chair, took down the lamp and pulled hard on the hook.

And that pull brought the case to an end.

For a square of the wooden ceiling came down, supported by folding clamps.

Above it was a box, and in the box were piles of Bank of England notes.

It was the stolen cash of the Bank of Hong Kong!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Bradys had won out again.

But the end proved very unsatisfactory.

Little Ah Chin was landed in the Tombs; they took him to New York on the tug. That he and his wife had come to Medhurst by rail and got around the fence was later known.

The treasure of the ceiling amounted to nearly half a million, but being in Bank of England notes, Mr. Harbord had only been able to realize on it by degrees, as all these notes are numbered, and to have dumped all on the market at once would have been fatal.

The Bradys tried to handle the disposition of the "Dusenbergs" estate and this find.

But McNulty jumped to Washington, saw the British Ambassador, and then the Secret Service Bureau interfered and took the case out of the Bradys' hands.

Meanwhile Dusenbergs was buried and Nina went back to her mother.

She never got a penny of her husband's estate, all being seized by the Secret Service Bureau.

Little Ah Chin was extradited to Hong Kong and went to prison for a long term.

What become of his wife the Bradys never learned.

McNulty claimed the reward and got all but \$5,000, which the bank sent the Bradys, who paid See Yek for his help in extracting them from the secret dens of Chinatown.

Of this money Old King Brady gave Nina a thousand dollars, as she and her mother were in dire poverty.

This was a full year after the wind up of the case of "The Bradys and Little Ah Chin."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS CHASING A CONVICT: or, BETRAYED BY A PHOTOGRAPH," which will be the next number (496) of "Secret Service."

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## ITEMS WORTH READING.

One of the "peculiar institutions" of the Quaker City, and of the world, is the school for parrots, recently established by a woman. These imitative birds are here taught to speak by means of a phonograph. The custom in teaching parrots the lingo which they prattle so amusingly has been for the teacher to crouch in a corner, out of sight of the bird, and repeat thousands of times the same word, the same phrase, till his back ached and his voice refused to emit more than a whisper. The way devised by this woman requires no exertion, and is much more successful. She sets a phonograph going at the parrot's ear and then attends to other affairs. The phonograph, with a precision and a perseverance man could never equal, drums into the ears of "Polly" the sentence that is to be learned. The term at the Philadelphia phonograph school of languages for parrots lasts six months. The tuition fee is forty dollars a term.

Dr. Danysz, the French bacteriologist, who undertook to rid Australia of its rabbits, has, it is reported, failed to convince the authorities, as a result of his experiments on an island near Sydney, that his virus is certain death to every rabbit inoculated with it; and anything short of that will meet with strong opposition from a certain section of the colonists. The owners of grass lands, however, who are the chief sufferers by the plague, welcome any remedy likely to reduce the plague, and in New South Wales the Government is being urged to allow the doctor to introduce his virus on the mainland, seeing that Dr. Tidswell, the government bacteriologist, has reported that, while being harmless to other animals, it has proved fatal to a large percentage of the rabbits treated with it on Broughton Island. On the other hand, this is opposed by a large number of persons interested in the immense export rabbit trade that has grown up in the colony, the extent of which can be gauged by the fact that nearly 1,000,000 rabbits are shipped from Australia every week. Their position is that it must be shown that the virus will wipe the whole rabbit race clean out. "If, however," said a Sydney paper recently, "Dr. Danysz can only reduce the number, then he must be ruled out, for he will absolutely kill the export trade, even if he only kills one in every hundred by disease. The English public will not risk getting the one diseased animal in its pots." In the meantime, in New South Wales alone, the pastoralists have spent nearly \$15,000,000 in erecting some 50,000 miles of rabbit-proof fencing.

Denmark claims that there is not a single person in her domain who cannot read and write. On the northeast coast of New Guinea, the Island of Kutaba, surrounded by a wall of coral three hundred feet high on one side, and from fifty to one hundred feet on the other, maintains thirteen villages of natives, to whom war, crime and poverty have been unknown

since the beginning of their traditions. The most peaceful and comfortable community in Europe is the commune of the Canton Vaud, in Switzerland. Nearly every one is well off, and there are no paupers. Finland is a realm whose inhabitants are remarkable for their inviolate integrity. There are no banks and no safe deposits, for no such security is essential. You may leave your luggage anywhere for any length of time, and be quite sure of finding it untouched on your return; and your purse, full of money, would be just as secure under similar circumstances. The Finns place their money and valuables in holes in the ground, and cover them with a big leaf. Such treasure is sacredly respected by all who pass it, but, in the rare event of a man wishing to borrow of his neighbor during his absence, he will take only the smallest sum he requires and place a message in the hole telling of his urgent need, promising to repay the amount on a specified date. And he will invariably keep his word, for the Finn is invincible in his independence. Agneta Park, near Delft, in Holland, is another Utopian example. A tract of ten acres has upon it 150 houses, each with its little garden and with certain common buildings and common grounds. The houses are occupied by the employees of a great distilling company, who form a corporation which owns the park. Each member owns shares in the corporation, and pays rent for his house. The surplus, after all expenses have been paid, comes back to him as dividend. If he wishes to go away, or if he dies, his shares are bought up by the corporation, and sold to the man who takes his place.

## WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

"How long has your mother kept boarders, my little man?"  
"Ever since she stopped being a lady."

"That reminds me of a story," said Mr. Longwind, settling back in his chair. "That reminds me I must go," said Mr. Dodger, reaching for his hat.

"Stocks were all down a few points to-day," remarked the broker. "The idea!" exclaimed his wife. "It's a wonder they didn't advertise it as a bargain day."

Wife—Our daughter is twenty, and she ought to be married.  
Hubby—Oh, she has plenty of time. Let her wait till the right sort of man comes along. "Not at all. I didn't wait for the right sort of man!"

"Your husband complains that you have been going through his pockets," said the court. "Your Honor," replied the woman, "I have, but only recently I read that it was the daily duty of everybody to put hoarded money into circulation."

"Jedge," said the prisoner, who had been caught with a chicken in a sack, "you ought'er go easy with me." "Why? You stole the hen." "I admits it, Jedge; I admits it," responded the prisoner. "But it's solemn truf dat hen jest seemed to be my affinity; yes, sah."

Wayback, Sr.—The time I went to see Barnum's world-famous white elephant— Wayback, Jr. (interrupting)—He never had a white elephant, dad—it was a fake. Wayback, Sr. (bristling up)—A fake, wuz it? Gol darn ye! I s'pose after ye go to college fer another year er two ye'll be tellin' me I never seen a real live mermaid in a tank av water!

"Do they have any fast horses over in the old country, Larry?" "They do thot, sir." "But they don't have any fast horses like we do over here. Why, our horses run so fast they can't stop." "Thot's nothin'. Th' horses in th' ould country run so fast thot they hov to stop to keep from catching up wid out running over thor own tails."



## A SINGULAR CRIME.

By JOHN SHERMAN.

It is many years ago since I learned to recognize the particular clickings of the telegraph instrument that called the central office. From them I got to understanding a portion of the messages coming over the wire.

When, on a certain August day, the instrument began to click in an imperative way, I pricked up my ears to listen.

I inferred that the message was addressed to the chief, and dropped back into my comfortable position.

Hardly was I settled when the chief called me. His tone was an excited one.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"It is a singular crime—a—a—murder, it may be. I want you——"

He paused abruptly.

"Well?" I said.

"It has occurred out of the city."

This meant that we had no jurisdiction, and the people no claim on us. Under ordinary circumstances a crime may as well be committed in Russia as in Jersey City, so far as it effects a New York detective.

"Out of the city, eh?"

"Yes. In the family of a gentleman whom I know well and owe many obligations to. It would be a favor to me if you would go and investigate the case."

I said I would do so. The details, so far as he could give them, were soon in my possession. The dispatch was a very meager one and might be construed to indicate the happening of any one of certain horrible crimes. I started at once.

Hastening to the Grand Central depot, I was soon whirling along the bank of the Hudson river. Just before the train reached the station at which I was to get out it passed within sight of a turreted mansion on an eminence overlooking the water. This was the Graver residence, whither I was bound.

Fifteen minutes later I left the depot. It was still early in the day, and the weather most delightful. A piece of woods looked so attractive that I deserted the road for its shelter, and shortly concluded to take a short cut through to reach the Graver mansion.

I am called a good detective, but surely nobody would call me a good woodsman, since I succeeded in getting decidedly "mixed up," if not actually lost, in a piece of wood covering a little more than four or five acres.

To my great relief, I at last got out of the woods, emerging at a spot where it skirted one of the handsomest grounds I have ever seen.

It was a perfect picture. Thousands upon thousands of dollars must have been spent in bringing to such perfection that deliciously green and velvety lawn.

For a gem in the picture, like a diamond cresting a golden hoop, were two fair women, who rested negligently, languorous on the green sward 'neath the shade of spreading branches.

I was advancing toward them to ask my way, when I caught a glimpse of two gentlemen—pinks of fashion—approaching from the opposite direction, and who had before now been hidden by intervening shrubbery.

So intently was their gaze directed at the young women lying there that they did not observe me, although I was not a dozen paces away when both raised their hats, and one said:

"A charming day, ladies. Mr. Harricott and myself have called to see if you would like to go yachting this afternoon? We shall have a good breeze, I think."

"I don't object," returned one. "Eva can decide it for both of us."

"I don't want to do that, May."

"But you must. I can't think of anything but the fate of Miss Graver. Isn't it awful to think of her lying there and her friends unable to say whether she is dead or alive?"

"It is terrible!" assented Eva. "Do you know, her condition puts me in mind of something Dr. Cruse once told me?"

"What was that?"

"Why, that there was one particular nerve—a motor nerve, I think he called it—injury to which would suspend all power of motion."

"It don't seem possible."

"That's what I told him. But he said the thing had been proven a long time ago by experiments on frogs, although it was not until recently that it had been discovered how slight an injury—if in the right spot—would disable a human being."

Advancing at this juncture, I said:

"I beg your pardon, but can you inform me the nearest way to the Graver residence?"

The direction having been given, I thanked them and hastened on my way, leaving them to settle the question about the yachting excursion.

Reaching the Graver place, I met the doctor. After introducing myself I was led to the room. On the way a brief conversation took place.

"What do you make of her case?" I asked.

"I am puzzled."

"Is she dead yet?"

"No. Her eyelids are lifted, and her eyes have expression in them; her body is warm and her limbs pliable, yet motion is impossible. Could I discover any evidence of a blow on the head I could understand it, but not a mark can be found."

The words of the girl under the tree came back to me.

"Why was a detective sent for?"

"Because, while no marks of violence are visible, there are certain indications pointing to somebody having entered her room during the night."

This last I saw to be true the instant I entered the room. The carpet bore muddy footprints, and the window-sill was marred by scratches. Looking out, I observed that a man would have experienced no trouble in getting into the room.

Having looked the room over carefully, I stepped to the bed.

Miss Graver was lying on it like a person enjoying a rest after the exhaustion following hard labor. Her eyes were wide open, and, as the doctor had said, contained expression, instead of the dull look of death. I touched her face and hands, and found them warm. Then bending over her I parted her heavy hair and closely examined every inch of her head. No mark of violence was visible. I began to feel puzzled, even as the doctor was.

"Could not fright have induced a condition of syncope or coma?" I asked the doctor.

"Not like this, in my opinion."

"Have you examined any farther than the top of the head?"

"No."

"Then we must do it now."

Noticing the elasticity and pliability of the body as we turned it over, a close scrutiny of the base of the skull followed. The elegant night-robe worn by the beautiful girl had a large ruffle at the neck that impeded investigation, and with respectful touch I loosened the top button and rolled the collar down.

The doctor caught his breath. On her fair white neck, hitherto hidden by the ruffle, was a great red blotch, closer examination of which disclosed the prints of teeth.

"What could have done that?" the doctor said. "There must have been an animal of some kind in the room."

"No animal's teeth did that," I decisively rejoined. "If you will look at those marks you will observe that the teeth are in the order found in human beings."

"But the shape——"



I nodded my head.

"The man has a peculiar formation of jaw—very narrow at the front teeth. This may be a clew."

Half an hour later, while sitting in the parlor waiting for an interview with Mr. Graver, I picked up an album, and began looking at the photographs. Just as the gentleman entered my eyes rested on a picture that caused me to draw a gasping breath.

"Who is that man?" I sharply inquired.

"That," and Mr. Graver glanced at it, "is the picture of Dr. Cruse."

"Who is he?" I asked, controlling my excitement.

"A wealthy neighbor of ours. He is a physician, but, for a pity, does not practice. He has a wonderful knowledge of the human frame and medicines."

"Has he frequently visited here?"

"Yes. He was a suitor for my daughter's hand."

My heart was beating violently. Before entering the parlor I had been making an examination of the grounds. As a result I had made a discovery. On this I touched, when I inquired:

"Is Dr. Cruse lame?"

"No."

"Isn't one leg slightly shorter than the other?"

"Yes, but it is not visible to an ordinary eye. Less than half an inch of a lift on the heel of his right shoe equalizes the difference."

I knew then that Cruse was the man. The footprints I had found in the soft earth outside showed that one heel was higher than the other. In a casual way I inquired where Cruse lived, and shortly was on my way to bag my speedily unearthed game.

"Is Dr. Cruse in?" I asked of the girl who answered my ring.

"He is."

"Can I see him?"

"I'll see, sir."

A couple of minutes later, the request came to step to his room. On entering, I found it empty. From an interior room a voice came.

"Please be seated. I'll be out in a minute."

"Very well," I said, and seated myself opposite the door.

Five minutes passed. I shifted my seat so as to command a better view of the door, all sounds having ceased in the interior room. I was hardly seated when something happened. A loop of rope dropped over my head. It contained a running noose, that, being tightened, made me a prisoner in the chair before I well knew what was happening. The manner of its doing was perfectly clear. Cruse had left the room and made a detour through others that connected, and had approached behind me through another door. When I was securely fastened he stepped in front of me. One glance took him in. I saw one of the most sardonic faces of a life-time, causing me to shudder.

"I know who and what you are," he said, accompanying the words with a laugh that made my blood run cold. "You are a detective, and have just come from the Graver residence. Listen! You can't fool me, and there is not once chance in a million of your ever rising from that chair alive, so you may as well answer my question. Is she living or dead?"

With a grim despair clutching at my heart, I adopted the bold course, and sternly said:

"She is dead, you brutal slaughterer, and you will be hung for the crime!"

He appeared surprised.

He dropped into a chair that stood facing me, and for a full minute appeared sunk in thought. Then looking up at me he blurted:

"You are keen, or you could never have come down on me so quickly. I had intended killing you, but I can punish you more deeply, I think, for prying into my business, in another

way, which you shall see presently. Have you discovered the motive?"

"Yes; you were jealous."

"Yes, that was it," he cried. "I asked her to marry me, and she would not listen. She preferred another, whom I swore should never possess her. Last night I silently forced an entrance into her room. I had a little instrument with me, a delicate thing, scarce larger around than a knitting needle and half the length. I stationed myself beside the bed, and when I was ready woke her with a kiss. 'It is I—Cruse!' I said, and before she could utter a cry she was powerless to move a muscle of her entire body. A thrust had done it. Yet you could discover no mark, no sign of violence. Knowledge and skill had effected something, the result of which was plain, but the cause undiscoverable. She was conscious, knew who I was, and what I was doing. I took her in my arms, I pressed her to my heart, I kissed her again and again, I buried my face on her beautiful shoulder, and in the delirium of my joy I marked her fair white neck with my teeth. For an hour she belonged to me—one whole blissful hour. Then I left her, telling her when she should be actually dead I would join her. You tell me she has died—I believed she would live for a week—so I must have struck a little too deeply. What I told her I meant. I am going to join her, and you will be punished in seeing your intended prisoner cheating you and the law you represent. It will wring your heart to see me die, and one Dogberry will be cheated as never Dogberry was before. Nor am I going to leave you a chance to balk me."

He rose as he spoke, and I was powerless to resist when he gagged me. This accomplished, he seated himself in front of me, and from a vial poured a dozen little pellets into the palm of one hand. Looking at me, he said:

"These pellets contain deadly poison. Before the last one is swallowed I shall be beyond all earthly help."

He opened his mouth and cast one of the pellets in.

"In five minutes I shall take another."

Timing himself by the watch that he took from his pocket and placed conveniently on a table, he took a second.

I could not speak, and he was not inclined to. He took a devilish satisfaction in noting the changing expressions of horror on my face. And horror had full possession of me.

Never had I seen so cool a fiend—so complacent a devil in human form. Strictly on time each succeeding pellet was swallowed. Through all that horror was, however, one gratifying reflection: my boldness, the lie I had uttered, had saved my own life and gave a chance of rescuing Miss Graver.

The seventh pellet was the last. He dropped writhing to the floor. I closed my eyes to shut out the horrid sight. When I opened them half an hour later it was all over. A few minutes further of torture, and then approaching steps were heard. A servant entered the room, and I was soon released. I hurried back to the Graver mansion and had a consultation with the doctor. Cruse's words had furnished the clew. At the back of the victim's neck a tiny spot was discovered, and the scalpel had speedily made an opening. A tiny piece of steel, like a needle-point, was extracted. It was followed by Miss Graver shuddering convulsively, uttering a moan, and fainting away.

I am not doctor enough to explain what nerve had been punctured to produce that result, resembling coma, but it is a fact all the same that it happened.

A few days later Miss Graver was recovered, and her story corroborated Cruse's words.

She eventually married the man of her choice.

After much pondering over the matter, I reached the conclusion that Cruse's jealousy had driven him to insanity. One good result was that all his immense wealth was disposed of according to a will as singular as his crime, for the benefit of the poor.



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